Postal History Journal

NOVEMBER 1959 VOLUME III NO. 2 WHOLE NO. 4

POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY OF THE AMERICAS

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● Its membership includes most of the prominent collectors of postal history material. However, there are many beginners who benefit tremendously from the association with advanced specialists.

Dues are $5.00 per annum for the fiscal year September 1st to the following August 31st. Without additional cost, all members will receive the Postal History Journals published during the membership year, also a News Bulletin, which will be issued at irregular intervals.

An application for membership may be obtained from Dr. William Reiner-Deutsch, Secretary, P. O. Box 24, Bayside 61, New York.

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Postal History Journal

Official Organ
of the
POSTAL HISTORY SOCIETY
of the Americas

NOVEMBER 1959 VOLUME III NO. 2 WHOLE NO. 4

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An Italian Commemorative Card**

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HARRY S. HEYMANS

Greetings From Our President

As another issue of the Postal History Journal comes from the press, my thoughts are with the Editors and the Philatelic Writers, who have contributed so much without remuneration.

Many times, both here and abroad, I have been told that we have an excellent Journal; I offer my thanks to that small but dedicated group whose contribution has made the Journal possible.

Cooperation of our entire membership is needed in order to continue our regular publications. To this end, I ask that you encourage collectors of Postal History material to join the Postal History Society of the Americas; and that you, yourself, prepare suitable articles for both Journal and News Bulletin.

When you have read Postal History Journal Number 4, please send a word of appreciation, criticism or suggestion to our Secretary.

Harry S. Heymans

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UNITED STATES

Mail to and from Ships of the United States Navy (1798-1861)

By RICHARD B. GRAHAM

Mails of the United States Navy offer a challenging and an intriguing variety of covers and historical connotations. Some mails originated in obscure corners of the globe where the Navy had served as a trailmaker for commerce. The fact that Naval ships served in these isolated areas for protracted periods, with little communication with home, has produced covers of considerable interest; for the lengths to which a sailor in the U. S. Navy of 120 years ago had to go to receive mail during his tour of duty on a foreign station are fantastic as viewed by today's standards; in fact some of the methods actually were fantastic then.

Naval letters have followed the normal mail channels of the world where such postal services existed, and where such channels were convenient to sailors who could afford them. Naval pay was not high in comparison with the rates of postage that prevailed throughout the world before the U. P. U. came into being and, as a consequence, sailors' letters usually were unpaid both to and from home.

The fact that Naval letters have followed many of the mail channels of the world make a Naval cover collection an extremely interesting challenge from the view point of rates and routes. These, together with the special channels and laws set up for Naval mails, can tax one's ingenuity to unravel some of the enigmas which pass before him.

In the early days of the United States Navy, warships were often the only representatives of the U. S. Government at foreign stations. In such situations, the Navy was required to act as an agent for the Department of State, to serve

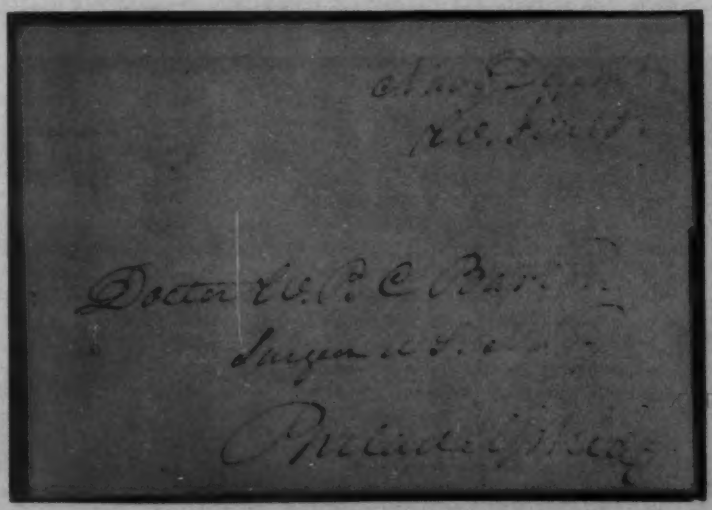


Fig. 1. 1813. Franked "Navy Department/W. Jones."

foreign commerce, and to represent the Navy Department; it also had to handle its own mails and diplomatic correspondence. Diplomatic mails existed before the public mail systems of the world, but there have been many periods in history when the public and diplomatic mail systems were intermixed to a degree, yet separate systems still exist. Because of this the mails of the U. S. Navy may be divided into classes, such as personal and official, or may be classified as to that which followed the public system, that which traveled by diplomatic pouch, or that which was carried by neither of these methods.

The United States Navy was established in May, 1798, and the first ships were in service by July, having been laid-down some few years before under War Department auspices due to a possible need to cope with the Algerian pirates. Although there had been a Revolutionary Navy, governed by committee, all of the vessels not taken by the British had been sold prior to Washington's first administration.

The Postal History of an organization such as the Navy has many facets; each deals with the passage of letters to and from ships, or shore bases and installations throughout the world. And the Postal History of the Navy is closely allied with the history of the Navy itself. Obviously, there is little space in an article such as this to review wartime Naval history which has been well documented. But little has been written concerning the peacetime activities of the Navy, particularly its administrative and organizational history in the nineteenth century. Consequently, some explanations will be supplied when needed.

No covers dating from the Revolutionary Navy have been seen to date. Considering the scarcity of "Colonial" letters from that period, the British control of the sea, and the small size of the Navy, this is not surprising.

The earliest known letter, which originated aboard a ship of the U. S. Navy, is dated 1825; no covers from Naval vessels of the War of 1812 have been found. Comments that were made regarding Revolutionary letters also apply to the period of 1812-1815, for other than the expeditions against the North African powers, and the "quasi-war" with France of 1798-1800, which existed only at sea, there were little or no peacetime activities of the Navy—or very little Navy, for that matter—until after the War of 1812.

After 1815, Naval activity expanded at a very rapid pace to protect and promote the booming American foreign trade, which had expanded very swift-

Fig. 2. 1835. Franked by Navy Commissioner John Rodgers. "Free."

From the Alfred Dowle Collection

Fig. 3. 1825. Mediterranean cover datelined "Bay of Gibraltar."

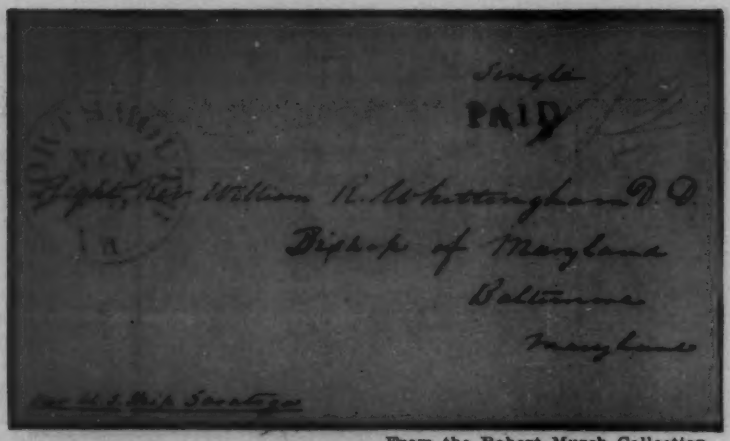
ly and extended throughout the world from the East Indies and China to Turkey and the African coasts.

Prior to the Civil War the Navy is mentioned in only one connection in the laws of the United States which relate to the passage of mails. This reference pertains to the right of Free Franking of letters, held continuously by the Secretary of the Navy from 1794 (mentioned, even through the office actually had not been created) until abolishment of the privilege in the 1870s. Certain other Naval dignitaries and officials were, during those years, added or removed from the lists of those entitled to the free franking privilege.

Fig. 1 illustrates the earliest piece of Naval Postal History that the writer has seen. This is an official letter, written and franked by Secretary of the Navy William Jones, and dated March 6, 1813, during the War of 1812. The cover is addressed to Philadelphia and is franked "Navy Department/W. Jones," without any other postal markings. The cover probably traveled from Washington to Philadelphia over the regular mail routes. It was not always the practice to datestamp or mark such early covers "free" as was done in later years. There really is no way of determining the actual route; in fact, the cover could have gone by ship as the British blockade was still in the formative stage.

Fig. 2 shows another "free" franked cover. It is dated December 21, 1835, and is franked by Navy Commissioner John Rodgers, who was one of the leading Naval Commodores of the War of 1812 and who was the first president of the Board of Navy Commissioners which was appointed in 1815 to advise the Secretary of the Navy on technical and other matters. The free franking privilege was specifically extended to members of that board by the act of March 2, 1827. The cover in Fig. 2 bears a red Washington City, D. C. c. d. s. of Dec. 21, (1835) and a straight line "FREE," also in red. The letter is on official business, enclosing a contract, and is addressed to the Navy Agent in Boston.

A Navy Agent was an individual appointed by the Navy Department to handle Navy business at locations away from the Department. It is probable that all Navy shipyards and major shore installations had such officials, at least at some time. It is known that temporary Navy Agents also were appoint-



From the Robert Murch Collection

Fig. 4. 1844. "Single Paid," "Per U. S. Ship Saratoga." Originated aboard U. S. Sloop-of-War Macedonian at Porto Praya (Prahia, Cape Verde Islands) and placed in the regular mails at Portsmouth, Va. (Navy Yard).

ed for short intervals of time at numerous locations wherever the need arose. These agents handled financial and personnel matters for the Navy, and there is certain evidence that some of them also served as forwarding agents for personal mails directed in their care intended for the personnel assigned to ships on foreign stations.

From 1816 until approximately 1823 the Navy expanded very rapidly to pave the way for commercial ventures to many parts of the world. Permanent foreign stations were established to which squadrons, usually of two to five vessels, were assigned on a rotating basis. The first such station, in the Mediterranean, was established in 1815 to deal with the Barbary pirates. Within the next ten years at least five more stations were established upon a permanent basis. These were: in the Pacific to protect whalers and other commerce to and from the East Indies and the Far East, as well as to the west coast of South America; and in the Carribean to clean up the piracy prevalent in those waters. (The western Pacific or Asiatic station was established as an offshoot of the South-east Pacific squadron.) A small European Squadron was maintained during those years, also two additional squadrons off the coast of Africa, and off the Brazilian coast, as anti-slaver patrols.

The West Indian pirates were mostly wiped out by 1829, but the Carribean Squadron, based at Pensacola, Florida, was kept active for many years in the campaigns against the Florida Indians.

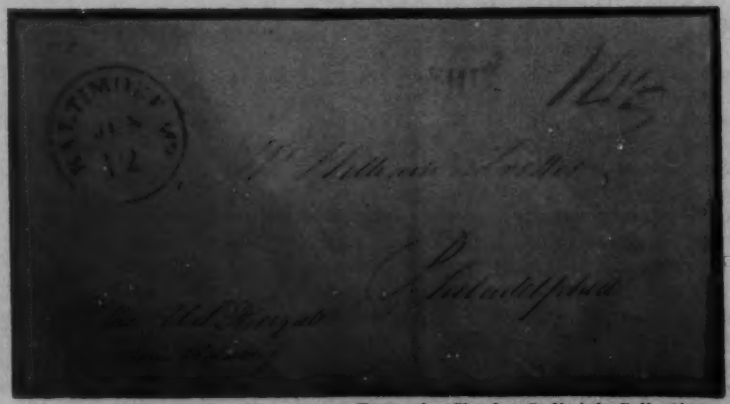
Covers originating from and directed to vessels of these squadrons have been seen. The earliest cover, which originated aboard a vessel attached to one of these squadrons, came from the Mediterranean. This cover (in the Alfred Dowle collection), illustrated in Fig. 3, came from the U. S. Ship-of-the-Line "North Carolina," the "show ship" of her day. The cover is dated May 19, 1825 and is datelined from the Bay of Gibraltar. It is an unpaid personal letter, addressed to Washington, D. C., bearing a New York c. d. s. of July 15 (1825) and a straight line "SHIP," both in red, and a red manuscript rated "20-¾." This rate is composed of the two cents ship fee plus 18-¾ cents, the rate for 151 to 400 miles—New York to Washington. This cover undoubtedly traveled on a commercial ship, as did most Naval letters from the Mediterranean prior to the 1870's.

Fig. 4 pictures a cover which came home on a war vessel, and is so marked. This cover, placed in the mails at Portsmouth, Va. (Navy Yard.) originated aboard the U. S. Sloop-of-War "Macedonian," at Porto Praya (Prahia, Cape Verde Islands) on October 28, 1844, and was brought to the United States on the War Sloop "Saratoga." It differs from normal foreign covers of that period in two ways: firstly, it was prepaid, and secondly, there was no ship fee. The first item is unusual for naval covers; the second is almost always the rule in this situation. The cover, addressed to the Bishop of Maryland at Baltimore, is endorsed in the same hand, "single paid" and "Per U. S. Ship Saratoga." It was placed in the mails at Portsmouth, Va., November 25, 1844, indicated by a red c. d. s. A red straight line "Paid" was stamped over a similar black manuscript marking. The cover was rated "18¾" in red, for the 151-400 miles from Portsmouth to Baltimore (a rather tortuous route?) without ship letter fee.

As is often the case with naval letters, the contents are of interest. The sender (ranked as Assistant Surgeon aboard the "Macedonian") was reporting upon his progress in his theological studies. Evidently to avoid burdening the recipient with the postage, arrangements were made with whoever handled mail aboard the "Saratoga" that the postage would be paid. This individual simply handed the letter in at the Portsmouth post office without collecting any fee for its passage as a ship letter. Both of these vessels were assigned to the African Squadron at the time. The cover, which is exceptionally clean and pretty, is in the collection of Robert Murch of St. Louis.

It should be noted that during the Civil War masters of naval or other government-owned vessels were not permitted to accept any ship letter fees.

Fig. 5 illustrates a very interesting cover, apparently of commercial origin as it is endorsed "Bain & Brown, London, England." It is dated January 11, 1826 on the back. Addressed to Philadelphia, it was not received at Baltimore until June 12 (1826, we hope) where it was rated "14½," correct for the single letter rate for 101 to 150 miles, Baltimore to Philadelphia, plus two cents ship letter fee. The cover bears a Baltimore c. d. s. of June 12, a straight line "ship" marking, and the manuscript rate, all in red. Since the



From the Charles Sudbrink Collection

Fig. 5. 1826. Commercial cover from London, England, endorsed "pr the U. S. Frigate John Adams." Placed in the regular mails at Baltimore, Maryland.

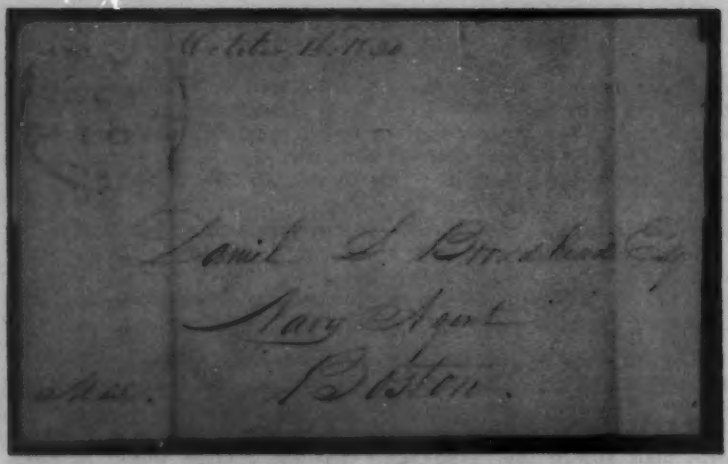


Fig. 6. 1830. Official letter, datelined "U. S. Ship Erie/Pensacola Bay/ October 16, 1830." Bears Pensacola, Florida Territory c. d. s., October 18.

sender endorsed the cover "pr the U. S. Frigate John Adams," there is a probability that it was carried on that ship as the cover was almost five months in transit. Although rated as a single letter, it is actually a wrapper of heavy white paper that bears no writing inside, so there must have been an enclosure which escaped detection by the postal clerk at Baltimore who rated the cover. Five months passage westward across the Atlantic was exceedingly slow, even by 1826 standards, and this may be an indication why similar covers carried by U. S. warships are not common. It is possible that the "John Adams" returned via the Mediterranean, or the African coast, or some other out of the way place, as such a practice was common. This very fresh and beautiful cover is in the collection of Charles Sudbrink of New Jersey.

A cover datelined "U. S. Ship "Erie" / Pensacola Bay / October 16, 1830" is shown in Fig. 6. Earlier naval covers than this from Pensacola have been reported; a cover with manuscript markings from U. S. S. Constellation," dated 1826, is known. The cover in Fig. 6 is an official lettter and is addressed to the Navy Agent in Boston. It bears the Pensacola, Florida Territory c. d. s. of Oct. 18 (1830) and is correctly rated "25," the single letter rate for over 400 miles. The Navy got its money's worth here, as the cover traveled nearly the maximum distance possible in the United States at that time. The Sloop-of-War "Erie" was then part of the West Indies and Carribean ("anti-pirate") Squadron. This cover demonstrates, even for domestic mails, that the only free official mails at that time were those franked by the Secretary of the Navy and the Navy commissioners.

Figure 7 shows an official cover addressed to the Navy Agent at Boston. It originated on the U. S. War Sloop "Concord" and is dated "Port Mahon/ April 25, 1831." The cover bears the fancy "ship 6" and "quarantine" markings used in Boston during that period. The Navy Agent paid the six-cents rate for ship letters with destination at the port of arrival. The carrier from Port Mahon, Minorca, where the U. S. Mediterranean Squadron was then based, was undoubtedly a trading vessel, inasmuch as a naval vessel would have delivered the cover directly to the Navy Agent at the Charleston Navy Yard.

An early cover from the U. S. War Sloop "Vandalia," written at Rio de Janiero, August 14, 1831, and addressed to Fallsburgh, New York, is shown in Fig. 8. It, too, probably traveled by a trading vessel. Upon arrival at New York the cover was marked with the New York c. d. s. of October 7 (1831), and straight-line "Ship" and "Free" markings, all in red. The "Free" was applied due to the addressee being a postmaster and therefore entitled to receive his mail free under the act of March 3, 1825. The "Vandalia" was then part of the Brazil (anti-slaver) Squadron which was usually split among the ports of Rio de Janiero and Bahia, Brazil, and Montevideo, Uruguay, ("River Plate" station). The "Free" marking on this cover could have been applied at its destination, but the uniformity of the ink and the absence of any rate marking seems to preclude this possibility. Similar covers have been seen from the ships of the Pacific Squadron generally dated from Valparaiso, Chile, or Callao, Peru.

The covers illustrated are typical of both personal and official mails from the squadrons on foreign station. Both followed the most convenient paths to "the States" and paid the same rates as regular mails. There were exceptions involving letters brought home aboard returning warships. When this occurred, such letters were generally placed in the regular mails without the two-cent ship fee being paid.

Fig. 9 shows another official cover to the Navy Agent at Boston. From the U. S. Schooner "Porpoise," the cover is datelined January 28, 1832 and is from Kingston, Jamaica. The "Porpoise" was either part of the West Indies Squadron (fast, light vessels being mostly used against similar vessels of buccaneers) or it was a courier vessel. The cover traveled on the trading ship "I. W. Cater" to New York, where it entered the U. S. mails. A New York c. d. s. of Feb. 20 (1832), a straight-line "Ship," and a rating of "20¾,"

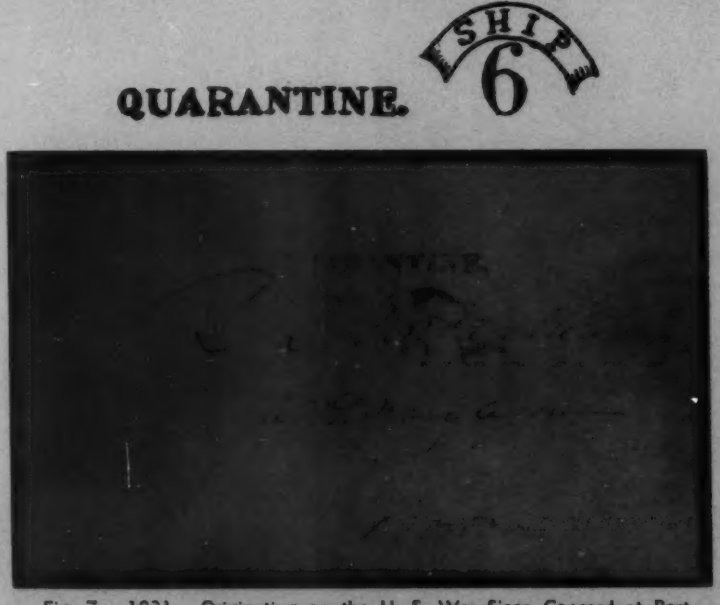


Fig. 7. 1831. Originating on the U. S. War Sloop Concord at Port Mahon, Minorca, this cover, addressed to the Navy Agent at Boston undoubtedly was carried by a trading vessel. Fancy "ship 6" and quarantine markings were applied at Boston.

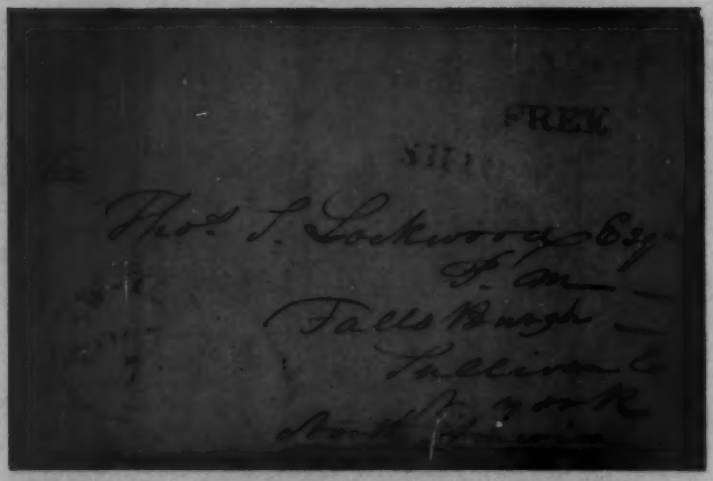


Fig. 8. 1831. Written aboard U. S. Sloop Vandalia, of the anti-slave squadron, at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, this cover probably traveled on a trading vessel to Boston.

all in red, appear. The rate is composed of 18¾ cents for the 151-400 miles to Boston, plus the two-cents ship letter fee.

One squadron of the Navy's foreign stations was in such a position that homeward bound ships, for conveying letters, were seldom encountered. The primary purpose or mission of most of the squadrons was to protect American trading ships. However, the purpose of the African Squadron was not to protect but to capture or destroy any ship which attempted to enter the lucrative African slave business.

Ilustrated in Fig. 10 is an 1849 cover from aboard a heavy sloop-of-war assigned to the African coast. The cover is datelined "U. S. Ship Portsmouth/ Porto Praya, April 28th, 1849." A quotation from an enclosed letter nicely illustrates the doubts and difficulties of sending letters home. The letter is to the sailor's wife.

> "It is nearly three month since I have had an opportunity for sending a letter in any direction, and my last went via Rio de Janiero. A brig that has arrived here from Philadelphia last Sunday is now about to sail for Sierra Leone, where it is possible she may fall in with some vessel bound to the United States. . . as there is no telling when we may have another opportunity to send by a vessel homeward bound from this place, I am determined . . . to write a few words, a line to take its chance via Sierra Leone. I have a very long letter (No. 16) ready to go by the first vessel we meet (which will offer a certain chance of reaching the United States) which contains a full account of our long and tedious cruise down the coast, in the Gulf of Guinea and to Prince's Island . . . We may have an opportunity of sending direct in the course of a week or it may not be for a month or six weeks, but the chances are very great that this may never get further than Sierra Leone."

This letter was written at Porto Praya (Prahia, Cape Verde Islands), the usual base for the African squadron. In spite of the letter-writer's doubts, it reached its destination in good time, comparatively, taking two months to

reach New York, where the cover was marked with the red New York ship c. d. s. of June 27 (1849) and a manuscript "7" rate. This latter marking covered two-cent ship fee plus five cents for carriage of less than 300 miles to the letter's destination in upper New York.

Figure 11 illustrates an interesting cover from aboard the War Sloop "St. Louis." The cover is datelined "San Juan de Nicaragua/ April 24, 1859," and an enclosed letter states that the vessel was lying just outside the bar at the harbor entrance contemplating an eventual inland expedition and bombardment of the town! The proposed action was to be in retaliation due to two American steamers said to have been seized "upon the lake." The cover was sent to "The States" aboard the American Schooner "Flying Dragon," a logwood trader, as endorsed upon the cover. Arrangements were evidently made that the cover was to be prepaid. It was addressed to West Port Point, near Fall River, Massachusetts, and the cover was probably placed in the mails, prepaid, aboard a Long Island Sound or other coastwise steamer to Fall River, as attested by a Fall River, Mass. cancellation on a three-cent 1857 stamp and a "STEAM" marking, both in black. The cover was just a month in transit, being cancelled May 24, 1859.

The contents of this letter are extremely interesting. In addition to the question of a possible expedition into the interior, the writer commented upon the state of feelings of the Nicaraguan population as to the desirability of the return of the American filibuster, William Walker, and described the reasons for the running ashore of a British Gunboat. Several other subjects of equal interest were discussed.

Not one of the covers described bears a foreign stamp, or even a foreign mail marking of any description. Although in all probability it was not considered desirable to place U. S. Naval letters in the mail systems of foreign countries due to economic reasons, there is a probability that this was not possible in most cases because most of the covers were placed directly aboard the ships which brought them back to the United States, or the covers were transferred between trading vessels without first having been sent ashore.

It was a difficult and complicated procedure for a sailor of the U. S. Navy aboard a ship on a foreign station to arrange that his mail reach home. It

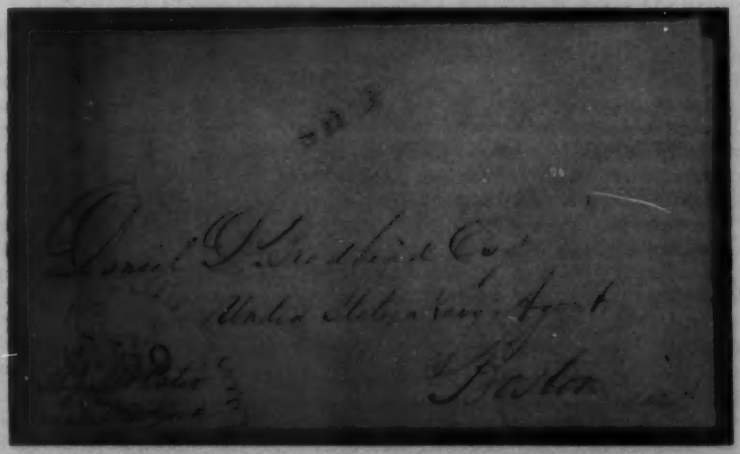


Fig. 9. 1832. By trading ship "I. W. Carter" to New York, this official letter was written aboard the U. S. Schooner Porpoise at Kingston, Jamaica.

Fig. 10. 1849. From U. S. Ship Portsmouth at Porto Praya (Prahia, Cape Verde Islands).

required an even more difficult and complicated arrangement, yet probably more important to the sailor, for him to receive mail from home. The official mails sometimes were sent out by courier vessels or warships replacing those at the various stations. For example, a vessel assigned to the Mediterranean would carry mails for both the African and Mediterranean Squadrons; the mail for the African squadron would probably be left for pickup in the Canary Islands, or Madeira, by the first vessel of the African station which had opportunity to do so.

Personal letters addressed to those aboard the ships of foreign stations could generally be sent in care of the Navy Department. However, the arrangements made by the Department either were not frequent or reliable enough to suit some of the personnel on foreign stations. Some of the arrangements that were made so that mail would be received sooner, or with more certainty that it would reach its desired destination, were worthy of an admiral.

In the days prior to the establishment of foreign stations, most of the missions of the Navy were simply missions to and from "The States," and the whole operation would be completed before arrangements for mail could be made.

Most of the information on how the mail was to be addressed and routed to the warships on foreign station has been gleaned from the instructions contained in letters from such vessels. A considerable portion of many of these letters have a very high percentage of the contents devoted to such instructions or comments on what mail had been received or sent and what was expected.

For example, the letter in the cover in Fig. 8 indicates that letters and newspapers from home had been received "through the politeness of Mr. R. A. Reading." Whether Mr. Reading was the U. S. Consul at Rio de Janiero or Montevideo, or a business man engaged in foreign commerce, we do not know. State Department records would probably indicate whether Mr. Reading was a representative. In any case, such an investigation would be about the only way one could learn if such arrangements were used at various stations in handling mail.

In a letter written aboard the U. S. Frigate "Congress," as she was leaving Norfolk October 25, 1845 (she was destroyed in these same waters by C. S. S. "Virginia"-ex "U. S. S. Merrimac" some 17 years later), appeared the following instructions:

"When writing to me, direct thus, 'Lieut. E. G. Parrott, U. S. Frigate CONGRESS, Valparaiso, Chile, care of the American Consul,' and enclose to the Postmaster, Norfolk, Va. Pay to Norfolk, or send through the Navy Dept."

This letter evidently was placed aboard the pilot boat, or mailed by someone who went ashore as the "Congress" left, as it was not treated as a ship letter, but bears a Baltimore, Md. c. d. s. of Oct. 26, a "STEAM" marking and an oval boxed "10." The cover was addressed to Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The heavy frigate "Congress" evidently was being assigned to the Pacific station at that time.

A cover dated "U. S. Ship Ohio, July 20, 1839/Bay of Naples" includes instructions to "direct to the care of Messrs. Hitch Brothers and Co., Marseille." The Ship of the Line (battleship) "Ohio" was assigned to the Mediterranean at that time.

Most of the methods of forwarding naval letters left no trace other than addresses, there were no other markings on the covers I have seen. The major exceptions to this are the covers forwarded by the Navy Agent at Baltimore, and those forwarded by the Naval Officers' clubs at New York and Boston.

Figure 12 shows a cover bearing the marking of the Navy Agency at Baltimore, although this cover is not addressed to a warship on foreign station. At least two other covers with this marking are known; both are directed to Dr. Norman Pinckney. The addresses are identical except that one cover is addressed to him aboard the storeship "Relief" at Callao, and the other aboard the War Sloop "Dale," with the Pacific Squadron. Thus:

Dr. Norman Pinckney
U. S. Pacific Squadron, On board the storeship "Relief" at Callao
To the Care of Capt. Nicholson, Barnum's Hotel
Post Paid to Baltimore

The reason for the marking on the cover in Fig. 12 is not clear. It is possible that official records were enclosed as the cover bears no writing inside. The duties of a Navy Agent probably would require writing many such letters

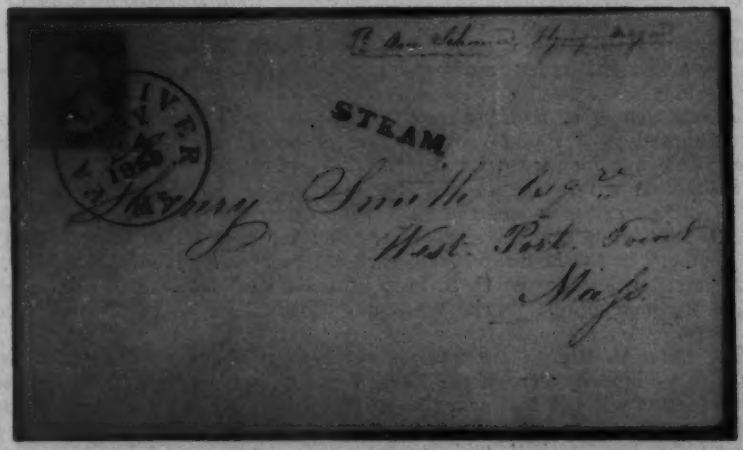


Fig. 11. 1859. "Pr Am. Schooner Flying Dragon," this cover was written aboard the War Sloop St. Louis at San Juan de Nicaragua.

NAVY AGENCY-BALTIMORE

Fig. 12. "Navy Agency Baltimore."

to forward bills, contracts, financial records, etc., and it would not be surprising if such a marking was used for all mail sent or forwarded. The Navy Agent marking, the Baltimore c. d. s. of Aug. 7 and the boxed "5" rate marking are all in the same shade of blue. The Baltimore datestamp is of a type reported to have been used between 1845 and 1851.

The cover that bears this marking, addressed to Dr. Pinckney aboard the "Dale," was reported to have been marked "12½ paid," from Easton, Maryland, and was possibly rerated "25" as a double-rate letter.

A drawing of the Baltimore Navy Agent marking appears in Fig. 12.

Figure 13a shows a cover to the same Dr. Pinckney. But, this time, the letter is addressed to the care of and forwarded by the Naval Lyceum, at Brooklyn. All the handstamped markings, including that of the Naval Lyceum, are in black. (A "composite" tracing of the Lyceum marking is shown.) As the cover is numbered No. 21, the correspondence evidently was voluminous; many covers from it are known. The cover bears the Easton, Md. c. d. s. of Jan. 24, a straight line "Paid" and a red "18¾" rate, as a single letter to New York.

Another cover of the Pinckney correspondence is known addressed to the Doctor aboard the "Relief" and in care of the U. S. Consul at Valparaiso, Chile. This was forwarded by the Naval Lyceum.

Still other covers are known addressed in care of the Naval Lyceum at New York to a sailor aboard the U. S. Ship "Raritan," Rio de Janiero, dated May 13, 1844, and from the same correspondence to a sailor aboard the U. S. Ship "Ohio," in the Mediterranean, care of the Naval Lyceum, Brooklyn. In a letter written aboard the U. S. Ship of the Line "Delaware," November 1, 1841, is an instruction: "write often and direct, care of the Naval Lyceum, New York."

The letter in Fig. 8, previously described, mentions "hearing of a letter written to me in Feby, care of the Naval Lyceum, in New York." It is possible that this letter was not forwarded as a later letter of the same correspondence (1849) remarks: "Do not write me in care of the Naval Lyceum as they may not trouble to forward it." This indicates that covers were forwarded to ships on foreign station, probably via vessels leaving the various Navy yards.

Little is known of the Baltimore Naval Agent. (Details, dates and information are respectfully solicited.)

The Naval Lyceum at the Brooklyn Navy Yard was actually a clubhouse and meeting place for Naval Officers. There appears to be ample evidence that covers were forwarded between the years 1841 and 1850 to warships on foreign station. Such letters were undoubtedly forwarded via warships leaving for duty at foreign stations. Considering the rather informal nature of such an organization, there is a probability that it could have gotten somewhat slipshod in forwarding letters addressed in its care.

Probably the Naval Library and Institute at Boston was an organization very similar to the New York Naval Lyceum, but nothing about it is known at present. Two markings of the Library are known which indicate probable service to Navy personnel as a forwarding agent for letters. An oval emblem (Fig. 13b) is illustrated in Blake and Davis' Boston Postal Markings to 1890, as a marking of an independent forwarding agency. The marking is listed as No. 452 on page 93, Plate 25, and is listed as having been seen on a cover dated August 11, 1846. Nothing else seems to be available on the marking. Information is solicited.

Figure 14a illustrates a cover with another and later marking of the Boston Naval Library and Institute (36 mm. in diameter). The Boston Postal Mark-

Fig. 13a. Brooklyn Naval Lyceum marking.

ings book of Blake and Davis lists this marking (Fig. 14b) as No. 452A. It was used during the early part of the Civil War. The cover and other information on this marking is shown through the generosity of Maurice C. Blake, of Brookline, Massachusetts.

The two covers reported do not have completely impressed imprints. This is probably because the marking is very large. A composite drawing has been made from these two markings which appear on covers addressed to vessels of the Civil War blockading squadrons.

Figures 15 and 16 show a pair of 1853 covers addressed to a vessel of the Mediterranean Squadron. These covers are addressed in care of the Naval Storekeeper at Spezia, Italy, then in the "Sardinian States." The covers make an interesting pair, they are from the same correspondence and are dated two months apart. The cover in Fig. 15 was carried to France by British packet via England and was 19 days enroute. It cost the recipient 48 cents as only the U. S. internal rate of five cents had been prepaid. The cover in Fig. 16 traveled to France by American packet. Twenty-one cents of the postage was prepaid, and approximately 34 cents was collected from the recipient at Spezia. This cover was 20 days in transit. These two covers are the earliest reported to date. Later covers have been seen or reported which were addressed to members of the Mediterranean Squadron, but were not directed in care of the Naval Storekeeper at Spezia.

A very fine cover of the Pinckney correspondence, bearing a five-cent red brown Jefferson and addressed to Dr. Pinckney aboard the Paddle Frigate "Susquehanna" at Spezia, was illustrated on the front cover of an auction catalog of an eastern dealer in June 1959. This cover was sent from Annapolis, Md., October 11, 1856. Another cover, also bearing five cents in U. S. stamps, from Terre Haute, Indiana, and addressed to the U. S. War Sloop "Constellation," dated May 4, 1857, was described in the Stanley Ashbrook Special Service, Issues Nos. 79 and 80, in late 1957.

Figure 17 illustrates another cover originating from the Mediterranean. It was written aboard the heavy War Sloop "Portsmouth," then in the Bay of Naples. The cover is dated October 1849. The "Portsmouth" was then searching for the Mediterranean Squadron Flagship "Independence" to

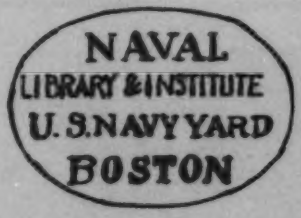


Fig. 13b. Oval marking illustrated through the courtesy of Blake and Davis' Boston Postal Markings to 1890.

deliver orders and mails from the United States. The "Portsmouth" then was to cruise along the coast of Africa. The letter was written during the passage from Gibraltar to Naples and was completed on October 22, 1849. The writer stated that the cover was to be delivered to the American Consul.

The arrival date at Boston is not clear, but the cover was rated as having seven cents due, which is to say two cents ship fee plus the regular single rate

Fig. 14a. Boston Naval Library Institute marking.

Fig. 14b. Enlargement of Fig. 14a.

postage to upper New York. The letter was marked "Liverpool" (not in the writer's handwriting?) which was then crossed out and "Pr l'Bateau del l' Etat/poste Francais'" substituted. The cover bears a marking dated Oct. 31, 1849 which is probably of French origin, and may be a red French packet boat marking, and a Bureau Maritime, Havre, double circle marking of 1 Nov. 1849. There are also traces of other markings not decipherable, in blue. It is possible that the cover may have passed through the Italian postal system. The real interest of this cover lies in the contents. It is amusing, informative, and downright fantastic from the standpoint of instructions and comments as to the ways that the sender was to receive his mail. The letter is very long, but only the sections which have bearing on Postal History are included in the following excerpts:

Mediterranean Sea, Oct. 11, 1849

> . . . at Gibraltar . . . we sent all of our letters to be forwarded via England per steamer, and were informed that before they could be mailed, they would have to undergo a process of fumigating—how ridiculous!

Fig. 15. 1853. "Care of U. S. Naval Storekeeper, Spezia, Italy." (See Fig. 16.)

Sunday, Oct. 14, At Sea.

I may have a chance to send this direct from Naples . . . I am very anxious to get your reply via England and Madeira . . . Immediately, upon receipt of this letter, direct a reply, thus to

Acting Master Geo. M. Ransom
U. S. Ship "Portsmouth"
Care of J. Howard March, Esq., Madeira, Care of Geo Perigal, Esq.,
No. 3 Clements Lane
Lombard Street, London.

(You must get it all on, Love, in as good shape, and as plainly written as possible). Put the letter under cover, postpaid to Mrs. Jno. O. Bradford, Boston, and request her to forward it to England, paying the postage—for which I will account to her husband, who has kindly authorized me to make the arrangement. And, I want you to mail one exactly according to these instructions on the 20th of every month . . . In the meantime I wish you to continue writing as often as once a week to the coast of Africa, the same as you did last year—sometimes to the care of the Library and Institute, Boston, and sometimes to the care of the Editors of the Salem Register. Direct no more letters to the care of Colonel Thomas, nor to the Lyceum at New York. Col. T. has left Boston; therefore he would not receive the letters: the Lyceum would never take the pains to forward them, except you might learn of some Government vessel being fitted out in New York for the Coast of Africa: in that case you may direct to the care of the Naval Lyceum. I hope, Darling, that you did not forget to procure some Post Office stamps before leaving New York. . . I don't trust that Postmaster at home lest he should forget sometimes to mark the letters "Paid" as in the instance last year when you wrote to Messrs. March and Benson. . . .

At Sea, Oct. 19th.

I am told it is not advisable to use envelopes in the Mediterranean because of the enormous rates of postage, which are charged upon

letters which are sent through Italy and France. It is the custom to use but a single sheet of very thin paper. . . .

Bay of Naples, Oct. 22

. . . We are told that if we wish to send letters we must close them at once, and send them on shore to the Consul. . . .

In other words, for Mr. Ransom to receive mail from home he had to make considerable special arrangements, and even then, his letters had to be mailed under separate cover to Boston, where they were "remailed," and then passed through at least two more forwarding agents. In addition, his letters had to be picked up at Madeira—still some considerable distance from the Cape Verde Islands where the African Squadron was usually based! Had Acting Master's Mate Ransom lived during the second world war, he, no doubt, would have been one of the real masters of planning and logistics!

No covers which originated from the Asiatic Station of the U. S. Navy dated before the 1870's are known to the writer. This station was first established by vessels attached to the Pacific Squadron cruising through the Far East. It is doubtful that any covers could have emanated from such vessels, as they had little or no communication with home. By the late 1840's it is believed that two or more warships were rotated on permanent assignment to East Indian and Asiatic Waters. Probably such naval vessels were stationed at Hong Kong after it was ceded by China to Great Britain on twenty-sixth of January, 1841. Macao was probably another location where the U. S. Asiatic Squadron spent much time.

Covers from the Naval forces in the Gulf of Mexico and in the Pacific off the Mexican and California coasts, during the Mexican War, undoubtedly exist, although the writer has not yet heard of such. Methods of handling such mails probably were the same as for other covers, except that letters from the forces off Vera Cruz and in the Gulf may have been returned by vessels chartered by the Army for supply purposes. Such vessels are known to have carried mail from the military forces in Mexico back to New Orleans.

The 1850's saw the opening of the first naval base on the west coast, that at Mare Island, in San Pablo Bay, near Vallejo, California. The southern

Fig. 16. 1853. Another cover addressed to the same member of the Mediterranean Squadron. (See Fig. 15.)

portion of San Pablo Bay connects with San Francisco Bay. Mail brought home aboard ships of the Navy to Mare Island were generally placed in the mails at Vallejo.

Figure 18 illustrates a cover that could have originated at that Naval Base, although there is a somewhat greater possibility that it originated aboard the U. S. Steamer "Saginaw" either at Panama or on the west coast of South America. The only marking on the cover is a round "Steamship 10," without town or date. This marking is believed to have been applied at New York, it is one of several which were applied at Ports of Entry to covers originating at points along, or "feeding" in to the California-New York contract steamship lines. The date is limited to the period between the commission date of the "Saginaw," Jan. 5, 1860, and Oct. 29, 1870, when the "Saginaw" was wrecked at remote Ocean Island, in the Pacific. (Some of her crew made one of the most fabulous small open boat sea voyages of history.) It seems certain that the cover originated somewhere in the Pacific. The "Saginaw" was the first U. S. warship ever built on the west coast and spent all of her short career in the Pacific, being assigned to the Asiatic or the Pacific Squadron when not on special missions to the Behring Strait or to some other remote area.

No mention has been made of what in later years was called the "home squadron." This squadron actually was generally dispersed among the east coast naval bases, such as New York, Norfolk, Philadelphia, Boston and Newport, among others. Covers originating from vessels located at these bases are fairly common. Usually they were handled in the same manner as other domestic mails of the period.

Figure 19 illustrates a cover which came from aboard the U. S. Paddle Frigate "Fulton," then at the Washington Naval Yard (now the United States Naval Gun Factory). The "Fulton" was one of the Navy's first steamers, completed in 1838, and her engines were built and installed at the Washington yard. The cover bears a red Sept. 5 (1838) Washington City, D. C. c. d. s., and a red "18¾" manuscript rate marking, covering the rate to upper New York. As is often the case with naval letters, the contents are of interest. The writer advised a friend, also a naval officer, that "Ohio" and

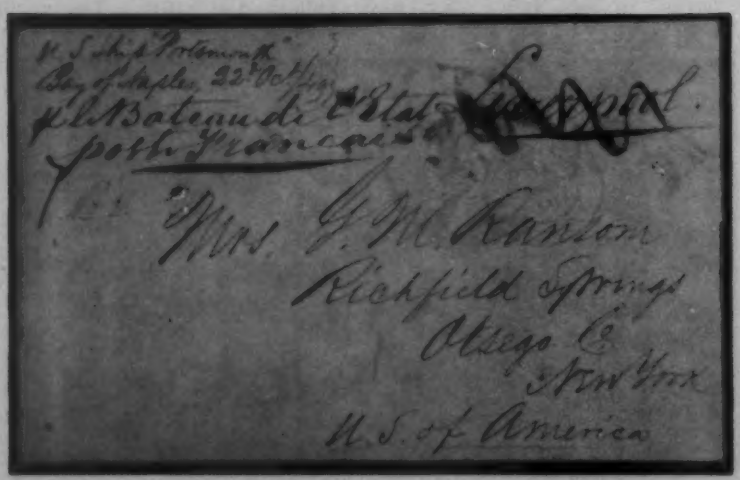


Fig. 17. 1849. From the heavy War Sloop Portsmouth at the Bay of Naples (See text for contents.)

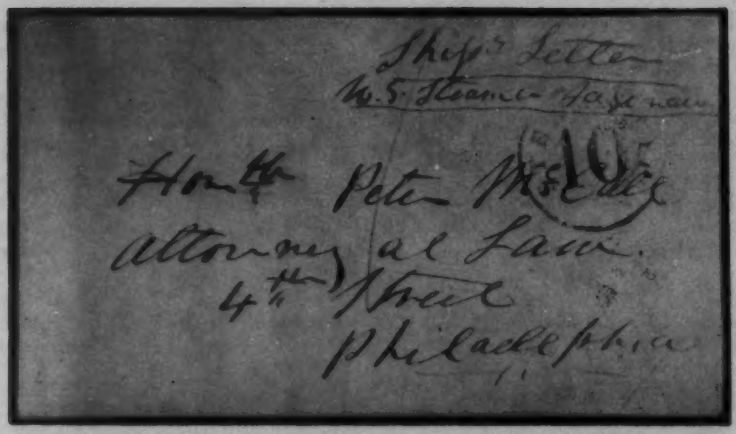


Fig. 18. (1860-1870). "Ship's Letter U. S. Steamer Saginaw."

"Constitution" are both going to sea, and that the officers are being selected, and to "forward your application and use your influence" for a berth aboard one of them. A later letter from the addressee of this cover indicates that he was successful in getting an appointment to the "Ohio." Many things have changed since 1838!

Figure 20 shows a cover from the War Sloop "Warren," at Norfolk, Monday, July.11, 1842. However, the cover bears a Washington City, D. C. c. d. s. of July 14, and a blue "25" manuscript rate marking. This cover was written by John A. Winslow, who later became famous as the man who sunk the Confederate raider "Alabama" during the Civil War. The contents of the letter implies why the cover was written at Norfolk and placed in the mails at Washington, three days later. Winslow had just been assigned to the U. S. Paddle Frigate "Missouri," but had not yet gone aboard. The "Missouri" was then coaling at "the yard" (at Norfolk) preparatory to setting out on a trip northward, then to Europe.

This takes the postal history of the U. S. Navy up to the Civil War (1861-64). The Navy and the handling of its mails took many interesting "quirks" during and after those years. This phase will be covered in a later article.

In presenting the postal history of an organization such as the U. S. Navy, which has existed on a world-wide basis for over 160 years, even such a small segment as that given here presents many varieties of what probably could be an extremely large category. It all adds up to one idea: the personnel of the Navy, or any other organization assigned to remote areas for long periods of time, will do their utmost to be certain that they receive mail. This will be done in spite of low pay, high postal rates, indifference and poor systems of communications.

Postal history is a part of the complete history of any organization, such as the U. S. Navy, and it is not possible to completely separate one segment from the whole. The more comprehensive the knowledge of both, the more satisfying is the study of either. Both are very interesting subjects. The study of naval postal history is actually a study of foreign mail routes and ship mails of the world, obviously, an extremely extensive subject.

It is not to be expected that an article such as this, a "first attempt" on the subject, will be free of errors and important omissions. It is fully comprehended that some of the ideas and analyses presented here may be incorrect. The writer hopes that such ideas will not go unchallenged; in fact, correspondence is invited. The writer's address is: 259 E. Dominion Blvd., Columbus 14, Ohio.

In addition to the references listed in the appended bibliography which were used extensively, sincere thanks and appreciation is due to many people for the encouragement and unselfish help in digging-out information and for the loan of items from their collections. Among these are Capt. Herb Rommel, U. S. N. of Newport, Rhode Island; Joseph A. Frayne, of Newark, New Jersey; the late Stanley Ashbrook, Fort Thomas, Kentucky; Charles Sudbrink, New Jersey; Al Dowle, Downers Grove, Illinois; Maurice C. Blake, of Brookline, Massachusetts; Bob Murch, St. Louis, Missouri, and the staff of the Ohio State University Library, Columbus, Ohio. Our apologies to those whom we have omitted through oversight.

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Fig. 19. 1838. From the U. S. Paddle Frigate Fulton.

Fig. 20. 1842. Written by John A. Winslow aboard the War Sloop Warren.

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"Napoleonic Grand Army" in The Netherlands, 1792-1806

By HARRY S. HEYMANS

Besides the markings of the "Armée du Nord" used from 1793 to 1798 (see Postal History Journal Vol. II, No. 1, page 61) there is also a variety of markings, "Hollande Troupes Francoises," used by the French Armies in The Netherlands from 1795 to 1806. In most large cities, a type like Plate I was used from 1795 to 1800, in red, but in the city of The Hague (den Haag or, in French, La Haye) the strike was in black during the year 1795, (It is rare.) Postage was, in most instances, paid by the receiver, but there were occasions when it was prepaid; then the cover was stamped P. P. or Port Payé

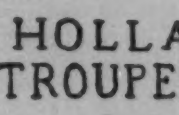

Plate I

Plate II

A similar marking (Plate II), but in a bolder type of letters, is found on covers from the city of Utrecht during the year 1798. It usually appears in red on the front of a cover.

Starting in the year 1800, there was a change in the spelling: Troupes Franc*aises* instead of Troupes Franc*oises*, abbreviated F*aises* instead of F*oises* (Plate III). This marking was used until 1805, mostly in the towns of Delftzyl, 's-Bosch (Bois le Duc), Gouda, Oudewater, den Haag (The Hague) and Utrecht.

Plate III

Plate IV

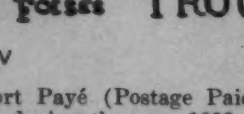

Plate V

Covers marked Port Payé (Postage Paid), as in Plate IV, are scarce. This marking is known during the year 1803 only in the city den Haag (The Hague) in black, and in Gorcum, in red.

There is also a marking (Plate V) for mail which could not be delivered: DÉB. HOLLANDE. Only a few covers so marked are known to exist.

From 1798 on, markings included also the initials of the different divisions. Known to collectors are Divisions A to F (Don. A — Don. F) applied to the fronts of covers (Plates VIa and VIb). These were used in the various towns wherever the divisions were stationed. As the troops were moved fre-

Plate VIa

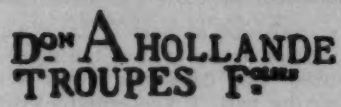

Plate VIb

quently, the towns are not precisely known for each division, but a cover with Division A (Don. A) usually came from Bergen op Zoom (1800-1802) den Bosch (Bois le Duc) (1804), both in black, or from Zutphen (1803) or Zeist (1806). The latter two are in red.

Division B (Don. B), Plate VII, was stationed in Breda during 1800 and 1801, and in Vlissingen (Flessingue) during 1798, and later again in 1806, also in Veere in 1806 and in Utrecht in 1800. All strikes are black.

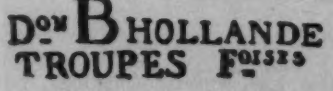

Plate VII

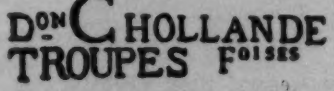

Plate VIII

Plate IX

Plate X

Letters with the marking Division C (Don. C) (Plate VIII) were mostly from Middelburg (1799), Veere (1800) and Vlissingen (1800 and 1806), all in black; while those despatched from Middelburg (1805) or from Arnhem (1806) were in red. All strikes are on the fronts of covers.

When Division D (Don. D), Plate IX, was stationed in Zutphen (1803-1804) and den Helder (1805) covers were marked in black; but when it was

stationed in the cities of Utrecht (1801-1804) and Vlissingen (Flessingue) (1804-1805), a red marking appeared.

Letters from Division E (Don. E) were mailed from both Vlissingen and den Haag (La Haye) during the year 1805. Black strikes appear on the fronts of the covers. This marking is rare. Division F was stationed in the Netherlands, but no Don. F covers are known, although they probably exist.

Postage for all letters should have been paid by the receiver, but there are two Port Payé (Postage Paid) markings known: one for Division C (Don. C), used in Arnhem (1806) in red, and one for Division D (Don. D), Plate X used in Zutphen (1803) in black. For this latter division, while in the camp near Utrecht (1804), the marking was in red. All of these appear on fronts of covers.

For mail returned or undeliverable, there is only one marking known, namely, Don. B. Déb. Hollande Troupes Foises (Division B—Débourse Hollande—Troupes Francoises), Plate XI.

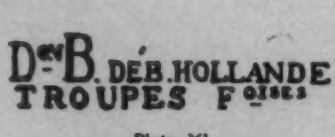

Plate XI

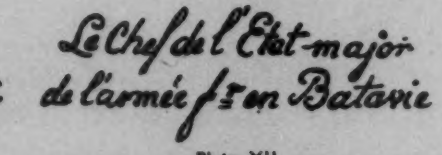

Plate XII

The markings of the various divisions, as part of the "Napoleonic Grand Army" do not mention dates or cities or towns, but the names and dates are ascertained from inside the letters. The dates and years were those of the French Republican Calendar, starting with 1 Vendemiare Year I (September 22, 1792) and ending 1 Nivose Year XIV (December 22, 1805). (See Postal History Journal, Vol. II No. 1, page 62.)

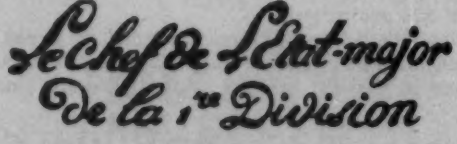

Plate XIII

The General Staff (Etat Major) also used special markings, but these must be considered as franchise markings. Some covers show monogrammed initials (griffe) as a guarantee that the franchise (freedom of postage) was permitted. Most letters from the General Staff came from The Hague (La Haye) during the years 1800 to 1805 (Plates XII and XIII).

NEWS BULLETIN

A News Bulletin, which will feature items of interest to the members of the Postal History Society of the Americas, will be issued at irregular intervals.

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International Mail Related to United Kingdom Maritime Postal History

By ALAN W. ROBERTSON

(Photos by Adrien Boutrelle)

The objective of this article is to add a little to the story in the form of an introduction to the maritime postal history of the British Isles, presented to you in the last issue of the Postal History Journal. That article was more specific to the United Kingdom. The present intention is to broaden the canvas and paint in a few of the lights and shades of a considerably larger picture. The subject remains fundamentally concerned with the maritime aspect, but in most cases endeavour is made to deal with considerations relative to the postal history of countries other than the U. K. This is in effect an attempt to cover at least part of the world-wide field compatible with the space available, with the hope of touching here and there more closely upon the particular interests of the reader. I shall adhere basically to the aspects with which I am most familiar, as all the items illustrated found their way into my collection because of their maritime flavour. Some readers will know more of the postal history of specific countries than I shall ever learn; and it may well be that in treating an aspect known to me, I have missed a more interesting and important facet. In such cases I shall be grateful for notes and observations from readers, that I may add such notes to the existing write-up of these items from my collection.

Complexity of varying rates of postage between countries reached such international proportions that it led to the Congress of Berne in September 1874 followed by the signing of the first International Postal Convention in 1875. From thence the Universal Postal Union developed from its original limited membership, to include almost every country in the world. Reciprocal rates of

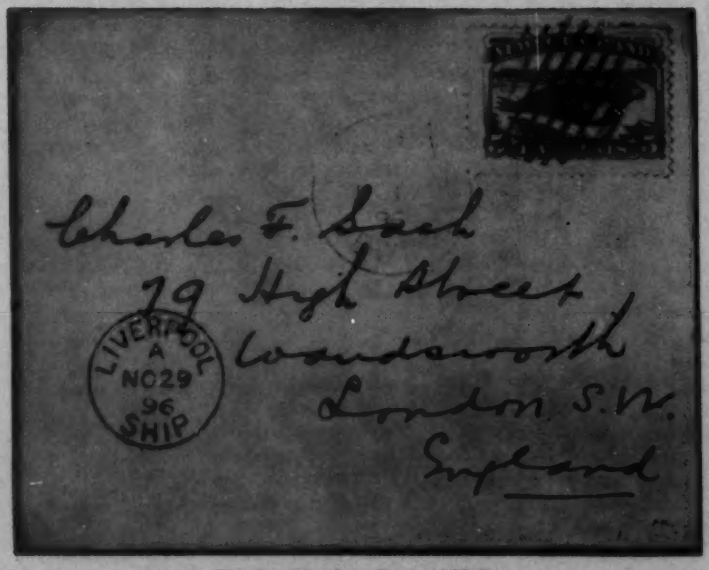

Fig. 1. Newfoundland (1896).

Fig. 2. India Bombay Packet Letter (1819).

postage equivalents in varying currencies were established. Newfoundland joined the Universal Postal Union in 1879 following Canada's entry in the previous year. The 5-cent Newfoundland-Canada U. P. U. rate was equated with that of Canada (and the U. S. A.) for letters not exceeding one-half ounce.

The letter datestamped St. Johns Newfoundland, Nov. 17, 1896, crossed the Atlantic at the standard U. P. U. 5c. rate. By this time the rate applied to the carriage of letters by either Post Office "contract-mail" packets or by private ship. By far the greatest majority of letters were carried by the large transatlantic liners under mail-contract. Nevertheless postmasters were empowered to despatch mail by *private ships* (not under regular contract to carry mails) if circumstances warranted. Normally this letter would have been struck with the concurrent circular packet datestamp at Liverpool, according to whether it had been carried by Canadian, British or U. S. packet. Regulations required precise indication of a letter's correct maritime course; hence the LIVERPOOL SHIP circular datestamp in red. (The use of this type, and a modification in smaller thinner lettering, is recorded from 1881 to 1919. From 1900 onwards the ink was usually black.)

The problems of despatching Post Office mails to and from the U. K. and India in the 17th and 18th centuries were great. The distance prevented the economical running of purely mail-carrying Post Office packets, similar to those operating since 1688 from Falmouth on shorter ocean routes, by varying scale of packet letter rates. The Indian trade monopoly was virtually in the hands of the East India Company, whose ships carried most of the mail by private arrangement between the sender and the captain of the ship. By the Post Office Act of 1815 (55. Geo. III. cap. 153) a measure of agreement was reached with the E. I. Co. for the carrying of P. O. mails by their ships, in conjunction with interim sailings by ships of the Royal Navy. These were nominally named "Packets" and a packet-letter rate (usually payable on delivery) of 3/6 per

single sheet (¼ oz) letter was introduced. To give identity to such letters, "Packet Letter" handstamps were introduced at ports along the main sea routes between India and the U. K., notably at Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, Mauritius, Cape of Good Hope, and St. Helena. In the latter half of 1819 by a new Act of Parliament (50. Geo. III. cap. 3) a "uniform" seapostage rate of 4d. up to 3 oz. on letters from the aforementioned ports to the U. K. was introduced, and the provisions of the act of 1815 were repealed. At most of the U. K. ports frequented by ships bringing in letters on the routes from India, "INDIA LETTER" handstamps were used to give identity to letters subject to the special lower seapostage rate. Inland postage within the U. K. was additional, and based upon the mileage between the port of arrival and the place of destination.

The unpaid letter from Bombay to Leith, illustrated in Fig. 2, is most interesting. It started its journey as a Packet Letter in November 1819 before the new provisions of the 1819 Act had become effective in India. By the time it reached England, (Backstamped London 9 MY 1820) the India Seapostage rate of 4d. up to 3 oz. had been established. The port of landing was Deal, where it was given "INDIA LETTER" identity, by means of the appropriate handstamp. This was a double rate (½ oz) letter (note "dble" in manuscript N. E. corner). The milage from Deal to Leith within the U. K. was 470m. at the inland rate of 1sh.2d. single. Two times 1sh.2d. plus 4d. India seapostage (up to 3 oz) brings the total due from the addressee to 2/8 noted in manuscript. The name "Marquis Hastings" in the S. W. corner is that of a well known Eastindiaman which brought the letter to England. One of the smaller Indiamen, with a tonnage of 450, this was the first of her four round voyages between the U. K. and India 1819-31.

The next letter is dated within, Barbados 14 March 1809. At this time Post Office mail packet boat services operated between Falmouth in Cornwall and the West Indies. It was however also the time of the Napoleonic War of 1793-1815, and the packet services were severely interrupted by enemy action. The long-standing practice of sending letters by arrangement with the captains of private ships became more commonplace with the uncertainty of the packet schedules. This letter, by private ship, was landed at Eastbourne (Sussex) a small place of little consequence (see Fig. 15 and text). The early oval SHIP LRE EAST-BOURNE handstamp is of considerable rarity, less than a dozen examples are

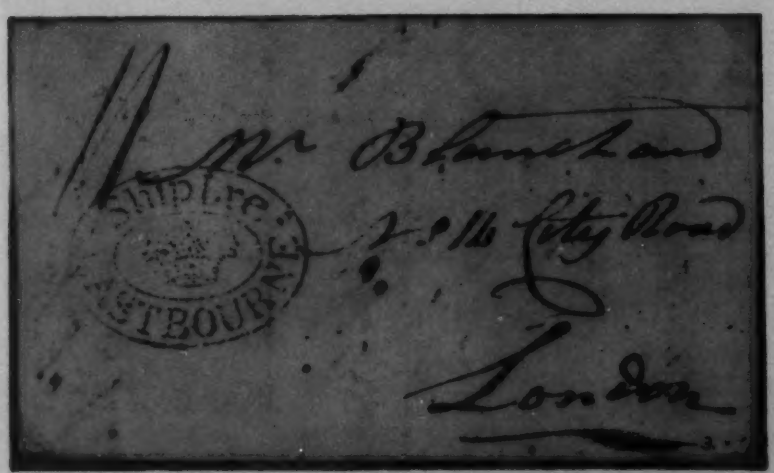

Fig. 3. Letter from Barbados to London (1809).

Fig. 4. Liverpool to New York by Inman Line (1860).

Fig. 5. London-New York by British & American Steam Navigation Co. (1840).

known, and this is the earliest recorded date of use. Charges (1809) : Ship letter rate 4d., captain's "gratuity" 2d., Eastbourne to London 63 miles, inland rate 7d., total due from addressee 1/1. (London backstamp 14 JU 1809).

Trans-Atlantic Crossing by Ships Not Under Contract

The British Post Office trans-atlantic mail contract was held by the Cunard Line from 1840 to 1867. This "packet" mail was generally carried to and from Liverpool, the main Cunard eastern terminal port. Letter writers nevertheless had the option of having their letters sent by the Post Office via other trans-atlantic liners providing they endorsed the front of the letter with the name of the ship of their choice and the route. If this was not done letters automatically travelled by the Cunard "contract-packets." As examples of this, the letters illustrated in Figs. 4 and 5 show a letter from London sent via Liverpool, and one from Liverpool sent via London. In Fig. 4 the ship nominated is the "City of Washington" of the famous Inman Line sailing to New York from Liverpool via Queenstown (Cove, South Ireland) at the prepaid (1860) ship letter rate of 6d. The adhesive cancelled by London obliterator. 6c Ship Letter U. S. rate due from the addressee in New York. Figure 5 shows a much earlier letter, weight 1 oz., i.e. at 4 times the 1840 ship letter rate of 8d., totalling 2/8 "Paid at Liverpool." "British Queen" is the nominated ship, a famous trans-atlantic paddle steamer, at that time the largest vessel of her kind. She sailed between London and New York, calling at Portsmouth en route, accomplishing 9 round voyages between 1839-41. Note manuscript "6" at right, again denoting 6c. U. S. ship-letter levy due from addressee.

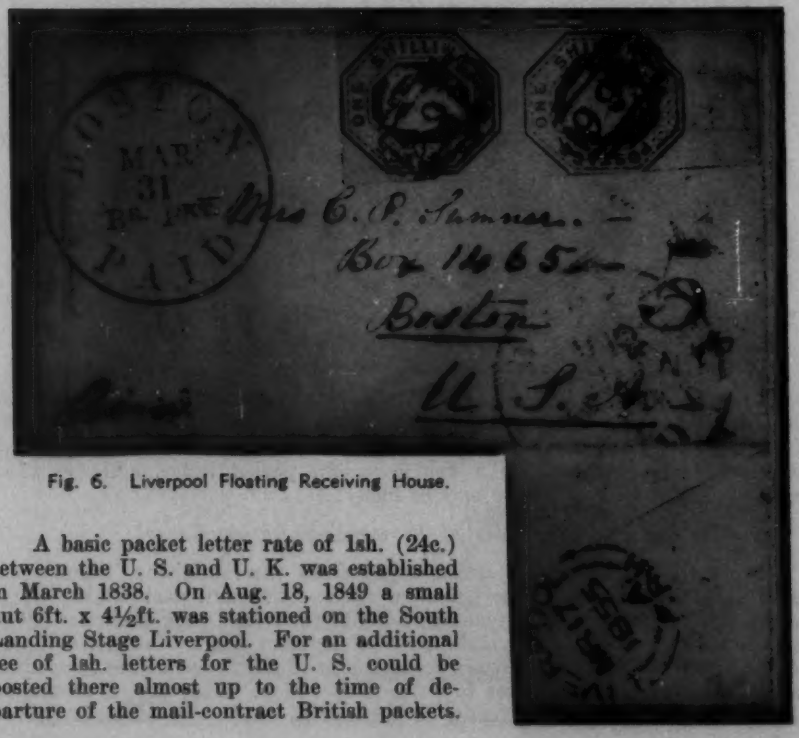

Fig. 6. Liverpool Floating Receiving House.

A basic packet letter rate of 1sh. (24c.) between the U. S. and U. K. was established in March 1838. On Aug. 18, 1849 a small hut 6ft. x 4½ft. was stationed on the South Landing Stage Liverpool. For an additional fee of 1sh. letters for the U. S. could be posted there almost up to the time of departure of the mail-contract British packets.

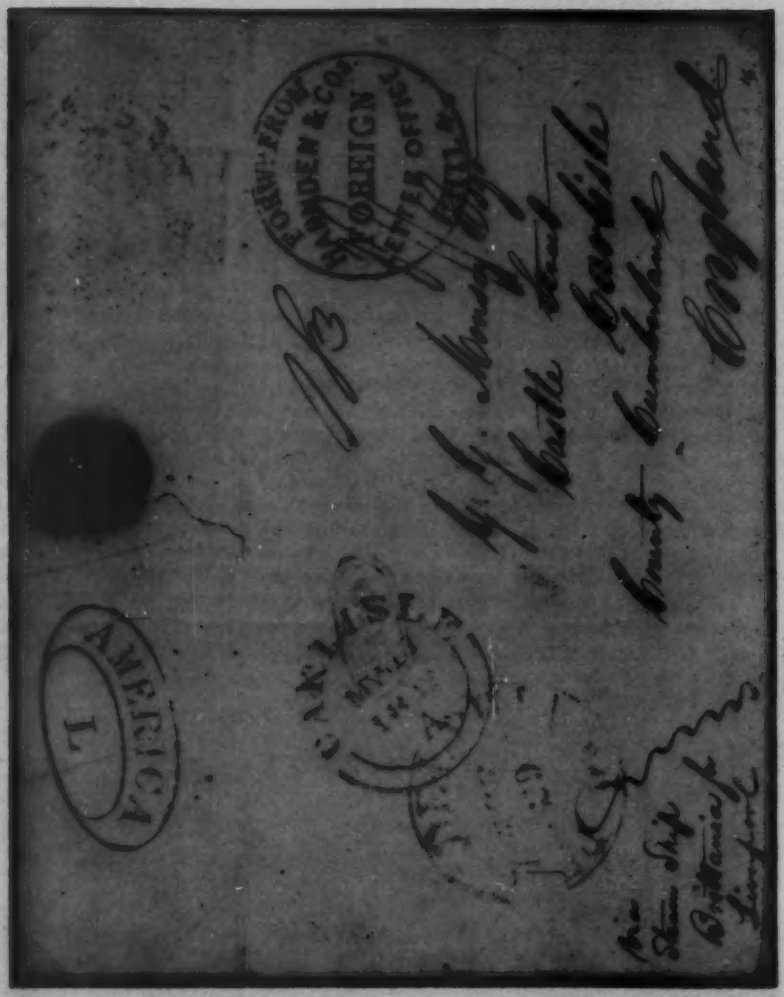

Fig. 7. Harnden & Company's Foreign Letter Office, Philadelphia (1842).

Such letters were struck with a small circular datestamp lettered "F.R.H" (Floating Receiving House). This service terminated in October 1864. Samples of the F.R.H. handstamp are scarce. (Moral: don't assume that two 1sh. adhesives necessarily indicate a double weight packet letter. Always check for the F.R.H. backstamp—you may be lucky!!)

Selected Examples of Forwarding Agents Cachets

Private individuals and firms, engaged in merchandising, finance and brokerage, etc. in many of the principal cities, towns and ports of the world, undertook the handling of letters entrusted to their care. By the very nature of their business connections, their local information was up-to-date, and they were able to arrange for the onward transmission of letters by the most expedient and satisfactory postal services in current operation. They styled themselves "Forwarding Agents" and many of them used their own distinct private

forwarding cachets on the letters they handled. At ports, shipping agents were of course those most qualified to insure that a letter was despatched by the first available ship. Some agents "obliged," others charged a small fee, and a number of them invited letter-writers to entrust letters to them as a normal encouragement for further business. The larger and more ambitious

Fig. 8. "Forwarded through Gilpin's Exchange Reading Room & Foreign Letter Office."

Fig. 9. Venezuela 1837. "La Guayra 13 de Julio de 37. Recibida y Dirigida por Valentin Salboch y Ca." By packet to U. K. 6/6 due from addressee.

Fig. 10. G. S. N. Company's wooden paddle steamer, "James Watt," built in 1822.

agencies provided "Letter Offices" and introduced "Reading Rooms" where the latest political, shipping and market news was provided.

In glorious technicolour, the letter shown in Fig. 7 would be a striking illustration. The paper is buff, Harnden & Co's Foreign Letter Office Phila. is in bright scarlet ink, the Philadelphia datestamp APR 29 Pa., and Paid are blue, and the endorsement "Via Steamship Britannia (Cunard) for Liverpool" is in red ink. The oval handstamp AMERICA L, the concurrent Liverpool Packet Letter handstamp, was in use in 1842 specifically on letters carried by the steamers of the Cunard Line, under contract to carry mail for the British Post Office. Handstamp 1/-, in manuscript form, denotes packet rate due from addressee.

North Sea Maritime Postal Communications

This could be treated as a specialized postal history subject around which a book could be written, from the time of the "Courier" posts between Ostend and Dover in the early 16th century up to the present day. The writer has dealt in some detail with certain aspects of the subject elsewhere and hopes to continue building the story.*

One of the most interesting chapters in this story concerns the period from 1824 to 1840 and the General Steam Navigation Company of London. This company, founded in 1824, was one of the pioneer shipping concerns in the use of paddle-steamers. These vessels traded regularly between London and a number of continental North Sea ports, and although the Post Office continued to run its packet service from Harwich to Cuxhaven and Hellevoetsluis (established 1661) the cost of introducing steamers on that service was uneconomical. Much incoming mail from the continent therefore arrived at London by the G.S.N. Co's steamers via the Thames direct to the Pool of London. The company's schedules operated so successfully employing the most up-to-date paddle steamers, (and at the same time saved the transit time of mail from Harwich to London by road) that in 1831 the Post Office entered into agreement for the carrying of contract-mail to certain continental ports by these steamers from London, and the Harwich packet station was closed. During the next decade much mail travelled in both directions over these routes from the Thames. Then came the railway, which in 1840 extended from London to Dover, heretofore the natural mail route to France and the southern half of Europe. With corresponding railway communication on the continental side of the North Sea, it then became much speedier to send the majority of the Post Office mails via Dover rather than by the longer sea-route across the North Sea.

* "The Maritime Postal History of the Br. Isles 1760 to date" Parts 1 to 5 written and published by Alan W. Robertson. Supplement No. 1 in preparation. (Editor).

"James Watt" was a wooden paddle-steamer of 420 tons. She was built in 1822 for the London & Edinburg Steam Packet Co. to ply between London and Leith and designed to carry two 18-pounder carronades and one long gun in case of war. She had the distinction of being the first steamer to be registered at Lloyds, and was very highly thought of in her day. After a long period on the service for which she had been designed she was bought by the General Steam Navigation Co. in 1836. Thereafter she carried passengers and cargos regularly between London and several continental ports. The majority of the runs were to and from Ostend. Occasionally there were alternative sailings between London and Hamburg.

The letter in Fig. 11 was posted at Hamburg 31st August 1839, addressed to London and directed in manuscript to go by the General Steam Navigation Co.'s paddle-steamer James Watt. "Schiffs-Brief-Post Hamburg" shipletter handstamp in black. Circular SHIP LETTER LONDON datestamp in red 9th Sept. 1839. Note nine days transit time from Hamburg to London as late as 1839! A time lapse greatly reduced a year later when the railway reached Dover from London and continental railway communications also developed. The letter was treated as an incoming Ship Letter, and as a double weight ¼ to ½ oz. letter it was subject to twice the current incoming ship-letter rate of 8d. Total of 1sh.4d., in manuscript, due from the addressee on delivery.

Fig. 11. From Hamburg to London by paddle-steamer "James Watt" (1839).

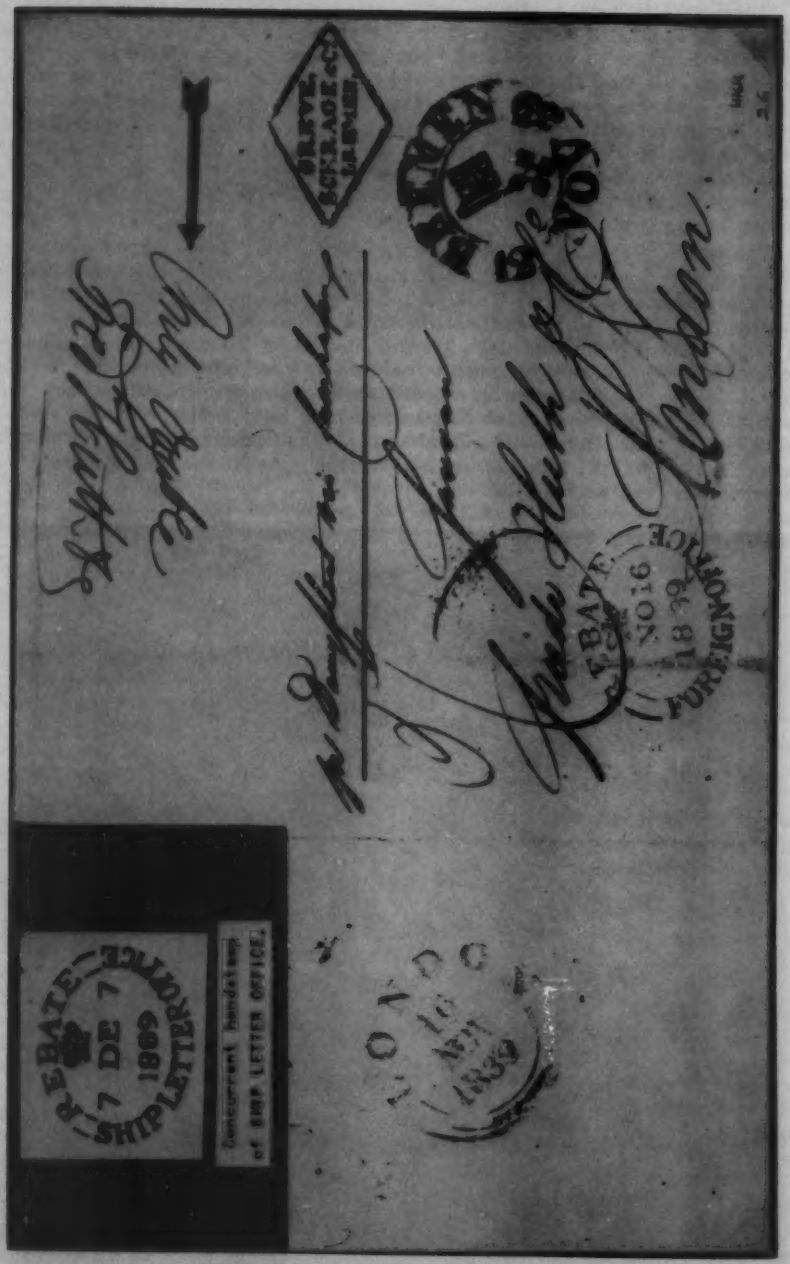

Fig. 12. Bremen to London by steamboat via Cuxhaven (1839).

The Rebate Procedure on overcharged letters was in operation for three months only, from October to December 1839. Figure 12 shows an unpaid letter datestamped Bremen "key" 12 Nov. 39, Endorsed "per. Steamboat via Cuxhaven" and received at the Foreign Office branch of the London G. P. O. 16th Nov. 39. (Mail from the continent was handled by the Foreign branch). The letter was originally accounted at the Foreign Office as over ¾ oz. but under 1 oz. chargeable at treble 1sh. 8d. rate from Hamburg. But the addressees disputed the charge claiming that it was "Only Double." The Foreign Office reconsidered the matter and a Rebate of 1/8 was allowed. The official handstamp was applied confirming the manuscript figures 1/8 all in red ink. Five different branches of the London G. P. O. used their respective Rebate handstamps, including the Ship Letter Office as illustrated. The procedure was discontinued in December 1839. Fine impressions of any of the handstamps are very scarce.

The 1872 impressions book in the G. P. O. Record Room records the despatch to Liverpool of a circular "P. S. Packet" datestamp. What the letters "P. S." stood for is still unknown. For a number of years it seemed doubtful whether the handstamp was ever used. Eventually the "proving example" illustrated in Fig. 13, was discovered. One can assume something connected with "Panama" (Steam ?) or "Pacific." (Constructive comment invited).

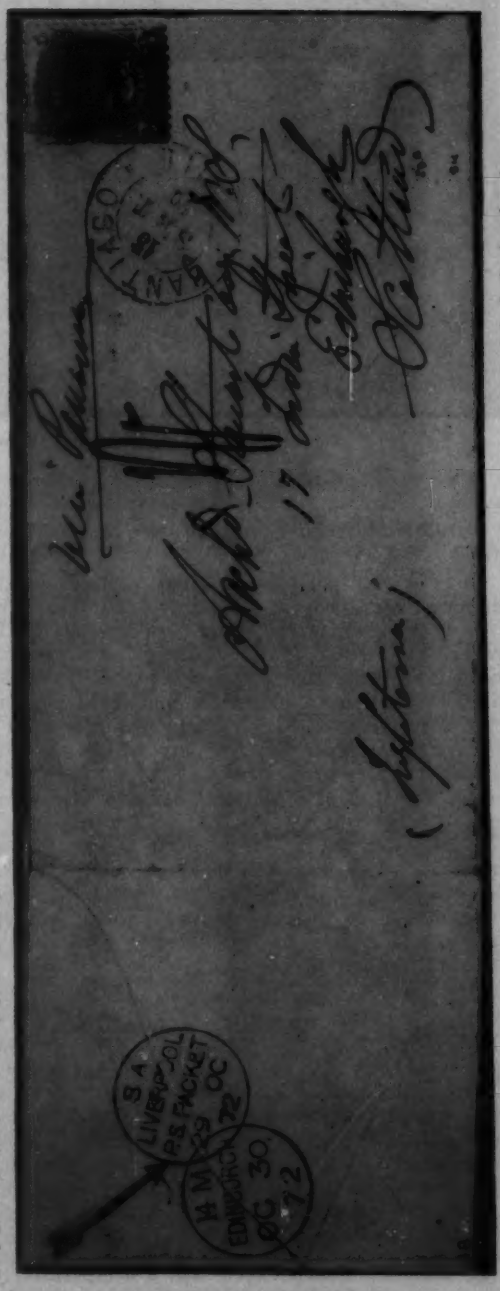

Fig. 13. From Santiago via Panama to Liverpool. The unsolved mystery of the Liverpool P. S. Packet handstamp.

Fig. 14. "Nothing can be allowed on this letter."

Two manuscript endorsements and their postal history significance

In Fig. 14, note the original writing on the letter front: "H. M. S. Warrior at Sea. August November 1813" then the address, and "Torrington" at the bottom left. The letter was written by Lord Torrington. A special privilege known as "Free Franking" was enjoyed (from the days of Queen Elizabeth until the time of Queen Victoria) by H. M. Ministers, Members of both Houses of Parliament and other privileged persons. They signed their names on the letter front and it was delivered free from postage. The "Free Franking" system however applied only within the United Kingdom and Ireland. His Lordship may or may not have been aware that once he was afloat from the shore of the U. K. his privilege ceased. His letter was landed at Deal, there struck with the oval SHIP LETTER handstamp of that port. It then travelled the usual course to the Ship Letter Office at London for the postage due to be assessed. The inspector there endorsed the letter front in red ink "Ship Letter. Nothing can be allowed on this letter." And so Mrs. Sowerby on receipt of the letter was required to pay 1sh.1d., comprising Inland postage based on mileage from Deal to Tonbridge (via London) 7d. plus 6d. ship-letter and captain's gratuity.

"Sea Houses Penny Post"—Eastbourne

The illustration in Fig. 15 shows the back of a letter addressed to London. It was written at Tabasco (Mexico) 18th. August. 1845, and given into the private care of Capt. Koper of the Brig Bremen probably sailing to a continental port via the English Channel. An endorsement on the letter back reads "Capt Koler of the Brig Bremen is requested to deliver the letter to an English Pilot in the British Channel." These instructions appear to have been successfully carried out, resulting in an interesting item of postal history.

In 1845 Eastbourne itself was a comparatively small town situated about one mile inland from the Sussex shore of the English Channel. It was the

place where the head post office of that area dealt with mail posted at the various surrounding sub-postoffices. Sea Houses (now joined up with the large holiday resort of greater Eastbourne) was then a small cluster of dwellings close to the beach, housing the local fishing community, coastal pilots, and other seafaring folk. There seems little doubt that having met and boarded the Brig Bremen further down the coast, the pilot, returning to shore, brought the letter with him. It was posted at the small sub-post office at Sea Houses, within the "Penny Post" area at Eastbourne. (The "Sea Houses Penny Post" handstamp struck on the letter front in red ink, has been drawn and superimposed on the illustration.) At the Eastbourne head postoffice the letter was not checked carefully as was usual. It should have been recognised as an incoming SHIP LETTER subject to the ship letter rate of 8d., and struck with the concurrent EASTBOURNE SHIP LETTER handstamp (examples of which are well known). However there was nothing on the front of the letter, in addition to the address, to indicate that it was a ship letter, so the fact was overlooked, and the letter was treated as an ordinary inland letter posted at Sea Houses. The circular datestamp of Eastbourne was applied and the letter travelled onward to London to be datestamped there on the following day.

Conveyance of Letters by Pilots

Recent studies on the conveyance of letters by pilots have revealed that this was a much more common occurrence than had been realized previously, particularly in the English Channel, one of the busiest sea trade-routes in the world. Pilots worked their own particular section of the coast meeting ships at one end and leaving them at the other. It is a natural corollary that the sender of a letter to the U. K. via a ship sailing up-channel to the continent expected the captain to take advantage of such opportunity. The home-harbour of a coastal pilot might well be at one of the smaller fishing villages unfrequented by (and unable to accommodate) ocean going sailing ships. It provides a reasonable answer to the frequent speculation as to how (or if) a particular ship-letter could possibly have been landed from an ocean going vessel at a place where the harbour was only large enough to accommodate the smallest of local fishing smacks. In respect of the coasts of the British Isles the fore-

Fig. 15. From Tabasco, Mexico, to London via Eastbourne.

going has been unquestionably established, doubtless the same considerations applied in America and other parts of the world.

One interesting feature of the letter in Fig. 16 is the Cork handstamp with the "mileage number," 124, below. This represents the number of Irish miles from Dublin. In 1784 the Irish Post Office became an establishment separate from that of Great Britain. The administration ran parallel with the English Post Office and continued to follow the same procedures. Postage was computed according to the number of miles to or from Dublin. The measurement on an Irish mile differed considerably from the English statute mile but postage was rated in terms of English miles, although many Irish town handstamps incorporated Irish mileage figures! The unwary postal historian who endeavors to work out rate problems without first checking the equivalent in English miles arrives at the wrong answer. The attractive datestamp with a deckle-edging was in use at Dublin from 1828-31. Prepaid letter: Cork-Dublin-London 1sh. 5d. Seapostage to Cape 2d. Total paid 1/7, Cape charge 4d.

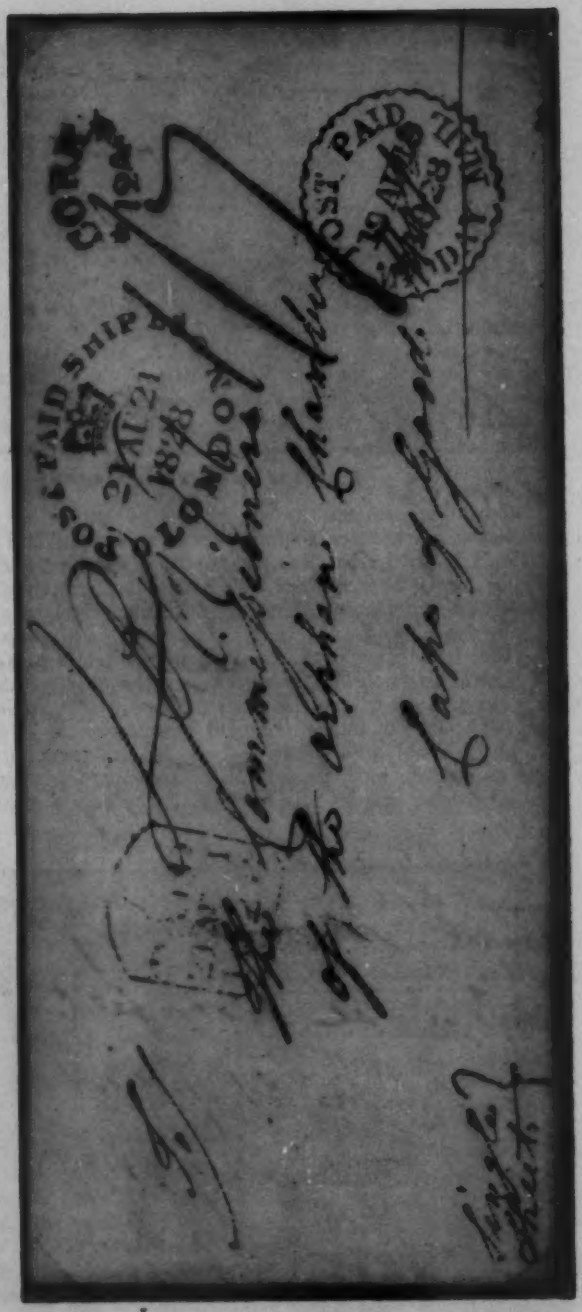

Fig. 16. Ireland. Cork to Cape of Good Hope (1828).

The initial handstruck stamp shown in Fig. 17, is the crowned circular PAID (official datestamp), AU. 1849, with an Admiralty official's endorsement: A. Maclaurin. Sent via London Ship Letter Office to the Surgeon of H. M. S. Eurydice at the Cape who was no longer serving, having been "Paid Off," the letter was returned to England.

The framed ENGLAND handstamp is that of the Capetown G. P. O. complementary to the double oval handstamp to the left. Returned unpaid and ap-

Fig. 17. Admiralty (London) to Cape and return. (1849-50) Slightly reduced.

propriately handstamped at London (JA. 28, 1850.) in red ink, en route to Portsmouth naval establishment, receiving datestamp JA. 28, 1850. The manuscript figure "8" represents the incoming U. K. ship letter rate eightpence normally due from addressee on an unpaid ship-letter. Officially accounted at Portsmouth in the naval postage account with the G. P. O.

Fig. 18. Montevideo-Bordeaux via British packet to the United Kingdom.

The subject of letters written overseas, addressed to France but firstly carried to the United Kingdom by ship or packet-boat is quite complex. (Figs. 18 to 21 and the text on the following two pages should be read as comprising one context).

During the 19th century the maritime trading power of Britain was at its zenith. Her merchantmen outnumbered all others. Each ship was a potential carrier of letters as the era of the ocean-going steamship and highly organised International Post Office mail-contract service had not been established.

Letters therefore were sent at first opportunity by a ship sailing in the direction of the country of destination. Letters destined for France were frequently carried by ships sailing directly to ports in the United Kingdom. Once landed, such letters then had to be handled and despatched onward to France by the British Post Office. These postal services involved time and money, and because until well after the turn of the half-century the majority of letters were sent UNPAID the process of recovering postage amounts from outside the U. K. involved a very complicated system of Anglo-French post office accounting. Although a number of Postal Historians are working on this subject, all the intricacies of this system have not yet been discovered nor mastered, and it offers wonderful scope to the serious student of postal history. Present space permits only a very light touch at the fringes of the subject,

as seen through the eyes of a student of maritime postal history. The interpretation of some of the French rate markings is beyond his present field of research.

The letter for France, shown in Fig. 18, was posted at Montevideo 2nd Jan 1841 (Montev? handstamped in purple ink), and endorsed "Packet Anglais." It was not until 10 years later that the British Post Office mail-contract with the Royal Mail Steam Packet Co. extended to Uruguay. In 1841 the last of the Post Office Falmouth sailing packets were still providing a regular mail service to and from the East coast of South America. And so, by British Packet the letter was carried to Falmouth. Letters destined for continental addresses were dealt with at Foreign Office of the London G. P. O. where the Packet Letter handstamp (orange-red ink) was struck. Its form, in script type of lettering, appears to have been exclusively reserved to use on incoming packet-mail in transit to the continent of Europe. Its purpose of course was to indicate that British Packet postal charges had been incurred i. e. 3/6, which had to be recovered from the French Post Office by accountancy.

We have referred to Ship Letter and Packet Letter handstamps used at the Foreign Office of the London G. P. O. (Figs. 18 and 19.). In 1843 an

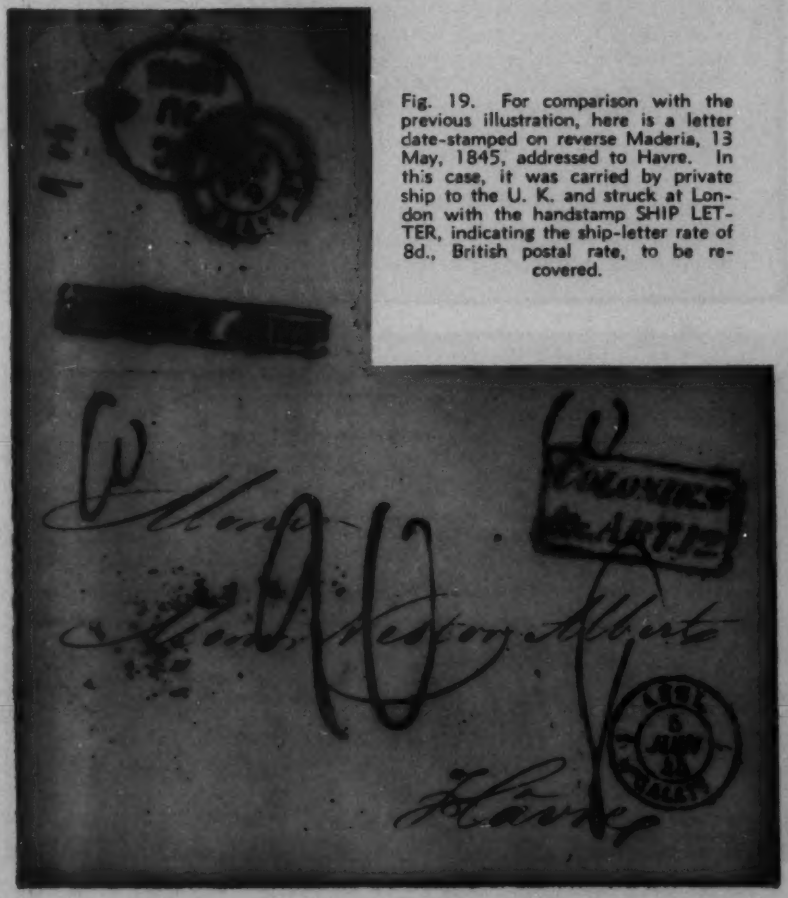

Fig. 19. For comparison with the previous illustration, here is a letter date-stamped on reverse Maderia, 13 May, 1845, addressed to Havre. In this case, it was carried by private ship to the U. K. and struck at London with the handstamp SHIP LETTER, indicating the ship-letter rate of 8d., British postal rate, to be recovered.

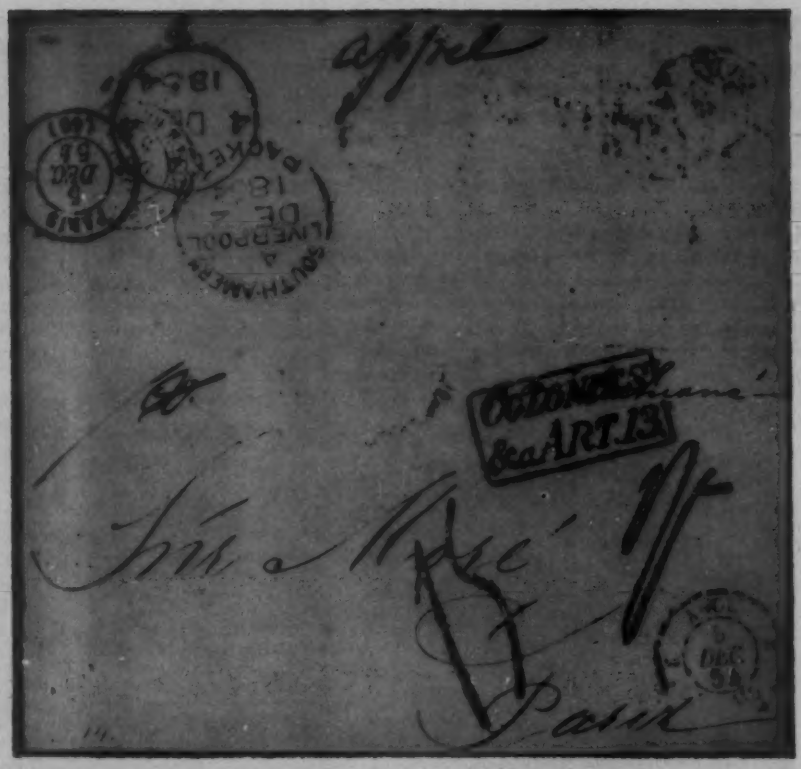

Fig. 20. Bahia, Brazil, to Paris via South American-Liverpool Packet (1854).

Fig. 21. Trinidad to Germany via United Kingdom (1856).

Anglo-French Postal Convention (signed April 3rd., effective from June 1st.) resulted in new agreements of a general postal nature between the two countries, but including new systems of accountancy and despatch of letters in transit through the U. K. To assist the differentiation of rates etc. on these "transit" letters from different parts of the world an improved system of sorting was adopted at the G. P. O. Foreign Office. A series of new handstamps (Figs. 18 to 21) came into use at that office. The interpretation of these various "ART" numbered handstamps is complex and is dealt with in detail in a long article by the writer in the issue of March 13, 1959, of Stamp Collecting. Space considerations preclude details herewith. Figure 20 illustrates a scarce Liverpool South American Packet handstamp (used only 1854-5) in green with complementary 1/- handstamp in green, Packet rate. Figure 21 illustrates "ART. 18" used for a short period in 1856 only. It was addressed to Germany, but was indorsed "via France."

The letter in Fig. 22, dated San Geronimo 24 Mar. 1854 and backstamped Aylesbury 16 Sept. 1845, was carried by the private sailing ship "Crusader," which, according to the lapse of almost 6 months from the time of writing, and allowing for initial delays, must have been a slow sailer. Helston in Cornwall is not a seaport but was a post-town for the area in the mid-nineteenth century. Letters landed from ships on the nearby coast received their Ship Letter identification at this office. Three examples only of this handstamp are at present recorded. (Observe how the spelling in the datestamp differs). In 1845 the incoming ship letter rate (single) was 8d. (Brought ashore by pilot ?? Refer Fig. 15 and accompanying text.)

Land Communication With Shipping

Before the introduction of modern methods of radio communication etc., shipping interests devised an efficient network along the shores of British Isles

Fig. 22. San Geronimo, Guatemala, to England. Rare Helston Ship Letter.

Fig. 23. Letter from Canton (1838).

nearest to the busier trade routes. They located agencies at many ports and coastal towns, connected by good roads with London, especially along the south coast adjacent to the Channel. Captains of incoming merchantmen then made for their particular agents; first to report safe arrival in British waters, for the news to be sent without delay by road to London. Secondly they also received any instructions which the owners had despatched to the agent by road. Thus information was exchanged several days before a sailing ship completed her Channel run, rounded the Kentish forelands and sailed up the Thames to London. Hastings on the Sussex coast possessed no harbor, but was one of the convenient "agency points." Ships laid off-shore whilst contact was made. The law required ship-letters to be handed in to the Post Office at the first place of call, and it was from ships "putting in for orders" that the majority of Hastings Ship Letters were landed.

Illustrated in Fig. 23 is the "Crutched Cross" cancelling handstamp. (See India Letter Deal Fig. 2. and accompanying notes on special India seapostage). Letters from China were not subject to the lower India seapostage rate of 4d. up to 3 oz. But because a ship had come from the far east, the error in assuming her letters were "India" letters occurred not infrequently,

and the incorrect India Letter handstamp was applied. This would have resulted in the incorrect rate being charged. It was therefore necessary to cancel the wrong handstamp and substitute the correct one. A special cancelling device in the form of a "crutched" cross was supplied to many port postoffices as an official method of cancelling incorrect handstamps. The foregoing illustration is an example. The device was introduced in 1819 and in the earlier years of use was struck in black ink; this however was not sufficient contrast to the usual black ink handstamp to be cancelled and so the colour was soon changed to red.

Gravesend

Gravesend lies at the point where the river Thames widens out into its broad estuary, 22 miles east of London. It is the first port on the river within the jurisdiction of the corporation of London, and in Queen Elizabeth's time it was established that Gravesend would be the point where eminent foreign visitors arriving by water were received with ceremony. At Gravesend was a customs check, and sailing ships awaited the tide to take them up to London. There also outgoing ships of the East India Company took on stores, last minute passengers and the mail; whilst incoming ships landed their ship-letters in the event of Gravesend being their first port of call in the U. K. No fewer than 17 different ship-letter hand stamps were used between 1775 and 1931, an indication of the important part played by Gravesend in English maritime postal history.

The letter shown in Fig. 24 was written at Havana 12th May, 1814, and backstamped London 12 JY. 1814. It was carried by ship "Robert Bruce" to England. The rare oval handstamp is known used only in 1814. The postal charges incurred in that year were: ship-letter rate 4d. Captain's "Gratuity" 2d. Inland to London 4d. Total 10d due from addressee.

Figure 25 illustrates scarce handstamp Port Louis Unpaid, thence to Calcutta to connect with a ship sailing to England. Calcutta Post Not Paid 1st

Fig. 24. Rare Gravesend ship-letter stamp. (Only three recorded.)

Fig. 25. Port Louis, Mauritius, to London via Gravesend (1817).

Octr. 1817, landed at Gravesend. Double weight letter charged: (1817) ship-letter and Captain's gratuity 2 x 8d. Inland to London 22 miles, 2 x 6d. Total due from addressee 2sh.4d.

Fig. 26 illustrates the remarkable journey of a letter from Rochefort to the Cape 1849-50. To appreciate the sequence of events, firstly read the address carefully.

1. Letter posted at Rochefort 4th Aug. 1849, bearing one 20c stamp, N. E. corner, and endorsed "Par Bordeaux."

2. Received Bordeaux 5th Aug. 1849, and returned to Rochefort for additional stamps.

3. Received Rochefort, 2 x 20c. stamps added (60c. rate) despatched again 12 Aug.

4. Received back at Bordeaux 14 Aug. Missorted into mail-bag for Mauritius.*

5. Letter travels to Mauritius. The last line of address is mis-read as being addressed to Bordeaux. Put on a ship from Mauritius bound for England.

6. Received Gravesend (India Letter Gravesend) and London G. P. O. 15 April 1850.

7. Address is correctly interpreted, *Cap de Bon Esperance* underlined, and as the letter then leaves London for the Cape by private ship, the outgoing Ship Letter handstamp of London is struck on the letter front. Seven months and 19 days have now elapsed since the letter first left Rochefort. (There are no datestamps indicating the final date of arrival at the Cape.)

Voyages	Bordeaux to Mauritius 7,900 miles. Mauritius to London 8,600 miles. London to The Cape 6,400 miles.	Total 22,900 miles.

* It may be that the ship sailing from Bordeaux was originally thought to be bound for the Cape; alternatively when calling at the Cape the letter may not have been handed over. The ship then proceeding to Mauritius as next place of call.

Fig. 26. France to Cape via Mauritius and Gravesend.

Consider also the India Letter handstamped Gravesend, Fig. 2 and text. Letters carried on the route from India including Mauritius and the Cape all subject to the special lower India seapostage rate (from 1819 onwards). This explains the use of the Gravesend India Letter handstamp although of course the letter did not emanate from India. Also observe Fig. 25, dated 1817, from Mauritius, but prior to establishment of India rate introduction of "India" handstamps.

Australia to the United Kingdom

Letters carried to the United Kingdom from Australia prior to joining Universal Postal Union present an excellent "selective" subject for postal history study.

In the writer's collection is a large volume devoted to the subject, about which little seems to have been written in a comprehensive form. Much could be written, but within the present space an introduction only is practical. It will be recalled that the Commonwealth of Australia came into being on January 1st 1901, by amalgamating the six hitherto independent Colonies of New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, and Western Australia.

In the early nineteenth century sea-communication to and from the colonial settlements was infrequent, and no organised post office mail service existed. Letters were sent by the masters of private ships as the opportunity occurred, and most of these ships sailed directly eastward across the South Indian Ocean, via the Cape to the U. K. Later with the opening up of the "overland" route via

Fig. 27. Variations of postal routes from N. S. Wales and Queensland to the United Kingdom.

Fig. 28. Victoria-U. K. rates standardised by U. P. U. irrespective of route.

the Mediterranean (prior to the cutting of the Suez Canal) to India it was sometimes quicker to send from Australasia via India.

Then, as postal agreements between the U. K., France and Italy developed a variety of postal routes in the Mediterranean area were added, and so towards the end of the nineteenth century when postal administrations in the Australian States had also developed, the respective state Post Offices were able to offer to their citizens a number of alternative postal courses to the U. K. But the rate varied according to the route and letters had to be endorsed on the front with the senders' preference. The study of these and the computation of a galaxy of permutations and combinations of rates is vastly interesting. A simpler way of referring to a few of the alternatives offered is to illustrate a small series of contemporary postal stationery items (Fig. 27).

In 1869 the Suez Canal was opened. Thereafter westbound steamships entered the Mediterranean via the Red Sea route. Alternative routes then operated, via Brindisi or Naples (Italy) overland to the U. K.; likewise via Marseilles and France and, thirdly through the Mediterranean and the Bay of Biscay to the U. K., a longer sea-route but involving no French or Italian emoluments. The two 1888 postcards commemorate the fiftieth year of issue of postage stamps in New South Wales. The first is in blue ink, at the rate of only 2d. "By the Long Sea Route." The second postcard is printed in green ink at the 3d. postcard rate "Overland via Italy" (Brindisi). An extra 1d. to offset postal conveyance across the continent. Likewise the two Queensland cards indicate similar alternative routings and differences in rates.

With the establishment of the Universal Postal Union many rates became standardised by reciprocal arrangements between member countries. The Australian colonies at first joined independently, and existing stocks of postal stationery were overprinted to meet the new requirements. Illustrated in Fig. 28 is a postcard of Victoria as an example of the type of overprint adopted.

Within, the letter, shown in Fig. 29, is dated Havre 4th Nov. 1846. On the reverse is London datestamp 5 NO. 1846. The three handstamps, in red ink, on the letter front reveal three distinct procedures in operation around the middle period of the nineteenth century.

1. Ship Letter to London. In the North East corner appears the inscription "Pr. Courier." Courier was an iron paddle steamer of 311 tons owned by the Southwestern Steam Navigation Co. She was a regular cross-channel trader to and from le Havre, and as a private ship, letters carried by her were identified as Ship Letters.

2. M. B. stands for "Mobile Box." Moveable post-boxes were installed on a number of cross-channel steamers by agreement with the French Post Office. Letters posted in such boxes received "M. B." identification of postal course at the English port where the P. O. official unlocked the box and received them. The concurrent Ship Letter postal charges were then applicable on normal letters. This however was not a normal letter, but a "Consignee's Letter" thus endorsed.

3. Exempt Ship Letter. A limited number of letters, containing invoices or bills of lading were permitted to be sent by Consignees of merchandise carried by the same ship, exempt from the usual ship letter charge on incoming letters by private ship. The Post Office official having satisfied himself that the consignee's name appeared on the ship's manifest, officially cleared the letter by the application of the handstamp here illustrated. At present the earliest recorded use of the handstamp is 1832 and the latest 1859. By comparison with normal ship letters the occurrence of these "Exempt" letters was numerically small, and the handstamp, especially in such a fine impression as this, is of some scarcity. It should be noted that it was only the ship letter rate which was subject to exemption. Any other inland or special charges concurrently applicable had still to be paid by the addressee on delivery of the letter.

Fig. 29. France. A "Consignee's Letter" from Havre (1846).

New Orleans to New York "EXPRESS Mail"

Fig. 30 illustrates a letter written at New Orleans 16th November 1838. Endorsed by the sender "Express Mail ! via New York. Liverpool Packet. 24th Nov." The regular domestic postage rate from New Orleans to N. Y. was 25c per sheet of paper for a distance of over 400 miles. (Act of Congress March 3, 1825, until June 30, 1845). On July 2, 1836, special U. S. express mail services from the Southern States at treble the regular rate of postage were established by Act of Congress, and remained in operation until July 1839. This single sheet letter was therefore rated at three times 25c (75 in manuscript). From July 1836 until October 12, 1837 letters could be despatched paid or unpaid, but from Oct. 1837 onwards prepayment was compulsory. In this case the 75 cents charge was debited to the New Orleans Post Office to Box or Account "No. 764." It was received at New York Nov. 26, (1838).

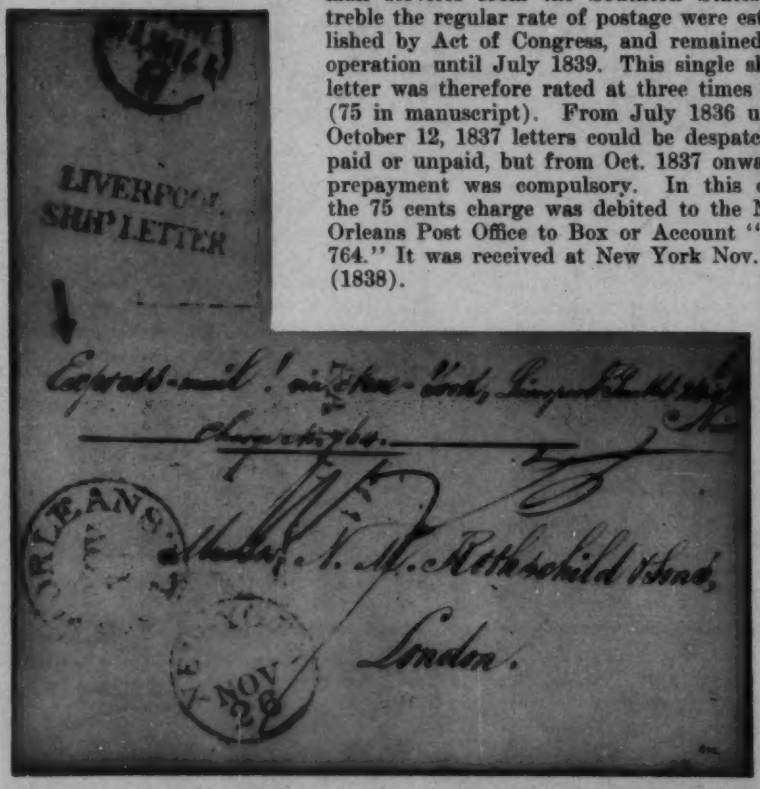

Fig. 30. "Express Mail" New Orleans-New York 1838. (Illustration reduced).

The steamships carrying Post Office mails under contract between New York and the U. K. were officially referred to as "Packets". Now by the time this letter reached New York on Nov. 26th (despite "express"!), the nominated packet of Nov. 24th had sailed. Therefore the N. Y. Postoffice did not wait for the next packet sailing but despatched by a ship not under mail contract (being empowered so to do when undue delay to the mails might otherwise result). And so by a "non-packet" ship the letter travelled to Liverpool, to receive the correct identification as a Liverpool Ship Letter. In 1838 the U. K. ship letter charge on incoming letters was 8d. From Liverpool to London was 206 miles, for which the inland charge of 11d. (170-230 miles) was incurred. The total was 1sh.7d. (1/7 in manuscript).

The "busy" looking letter-front, illustrated in Fig. 31, graphically tells its own story if the sequence of the datestamps is followed. Commencing as

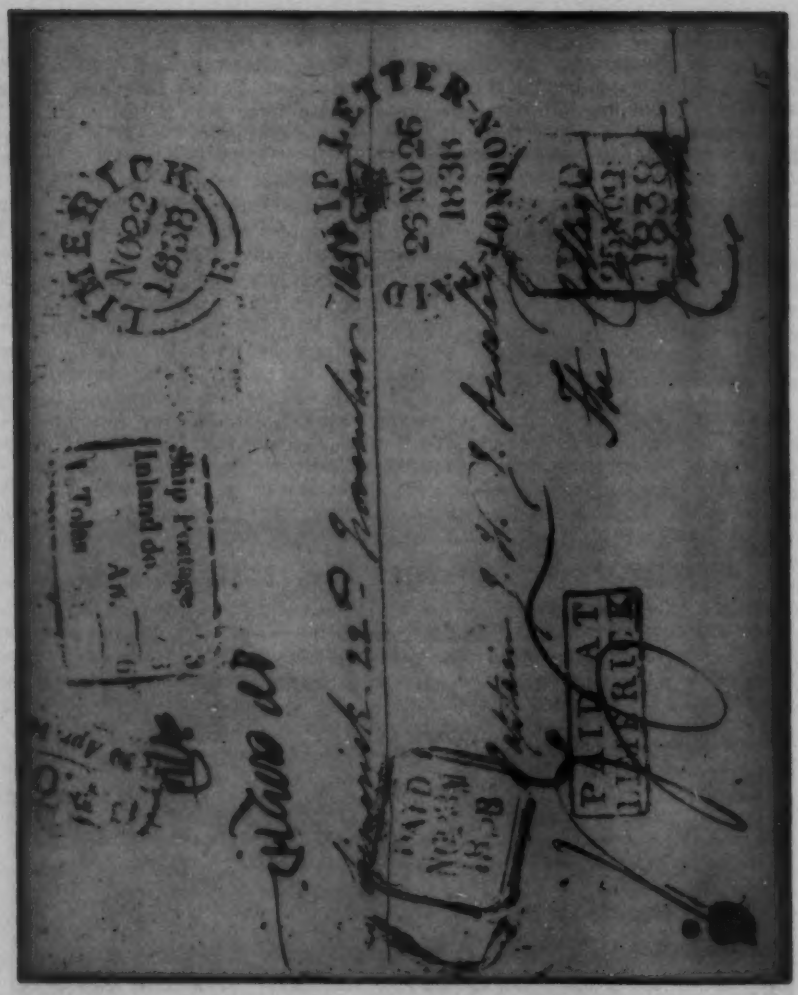

Fig. 31. Ireland. Limerick to Calcutta 1838-39.

a fully prepaid* Letter at Limerick No. 22, 1838. It was handled at the Dublin G. P. O. Nov. 23. Received at London Sunday Nov. 25 (note "s" in the tombstone datestamp). On the following day the London Ship Letter Office oval datestamp "Paid" was struck in red. It reached Calcutta by sea, Calcutta G. P. O. datestamp 1839 Apr. 16 (4 months 21 days transit). Calcutta accountancy handstamp shows Ship Postage 3as. plus Inland 3as. Indian postage due on a letter weighing 1 Tolas. (Indian measure of weight 1 Tolas equalling weight of one rupee, approx 2/5th oz.).

* 1sh.6d. prepaid comprising Limerick-Dublin (via Holyhead pkt.) to London for 1sh4d.; outward seapostage to India 2d. (up to ½ oz.).

With the Canadian Contingents in South Africa—1899-1900 (Boer War)

By ED RICHARDSON

(Photos by Adrien Boutrelle)

At the outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War, October 11, 1899, Canada had no special interests involved in South Africa, yet she had on numerous occasions expressed strong sympathy for Great Britain's South African policies. Canada had successfuly demonstrated that it was possible for two peoples, with different cultures and languages, to share the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship, so she strongly condemned the actions of the Boer Republics and advocated a policy of equal rights for the Boers and Uitlanders alike.

Canada lost no time in promptly mobilizing a fairly large force for duty in South Africa. On October 30, 1899 the First Canadian Contingent, consisting officially of 1,019 men, officers and staff embarked at Quebec City on the "SS Sardinian" of the Allan Line. (There also were reported to be about 25 stowaways aboard). The makeup of this First Contingent was as follows:

A Company—from British Columbia and Manitoba
B Company—from London, Ontario
C Company—from Toronto, Ontario
D Company—from Kingston and Ottawa, Ontario
E Company—from Montreal, P. Q.
F Company—from Quebec, P. Q.
G Company—from New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island
H Company—from Nova Scotia.

Fig. 1. A cover from a soldier in the First Canadian Contingent, which was transferred at sea while en route from Canada to South Africa. Received at Brussels, Nov. 30, 1899, the day the Contingent landed at Cape Town. Type I, YMCA cover.

Fig. 2. A cover from the same correspondence as Fig. 1, postmarked the day of landing at Cape Town, November 30, 1899. Received at Brussels December 24th, postage due stamps were applied and cancelled Christmas Day.

Among the soldiers in H Company was a D. Osborne, a prolific letter-writer. A number of covers from him, addressed presumably to his wife or mother, in Belgium, turned up in the sale of the William C. Hinde collection of postal history material.

The First Contingent did not touch land again until it reached Cape Town on November 30, exactly one month after sailing. This was a great disappointment to the men for they had hoped they might stop at St. Vincent in the Cape Verde Islands.

When the "SS Sardinian" had been at sea for about ten days this hope still ran high and there was a great deal of letter writing to friends and rela-

Fig. 3. Reverse of Cover shown in Fig. 2. Note the emblem on flap consisting of a Canadian maple leaf, and "Canadian Contingent / 1899-1900." Manuscript notation indicates that the letter was written "Nov. 25, 1899 — SS Sardinian — few days before landing.

tives in expectation that a boat would be sent off with the mail. D. Osborne prepared one such letter (Fig. 1), and on the reverse side of the cover is the notation, "Nov. 10th, 1899, S. S. Sardinian—few days off St. Vincent." This was two days before the anticipated stop in the Cape Verde Islands.

Four days later, on November 16th, the "S. S. Rangatira," bound for Southampton, England, was sighted. This time the troops were not disappointed; two large bags of mail, including the cover illustrated in Fig. 1, were placed in a life boat and borne to the waiting broad-hulled freighter.

Backstamped with an in-transit London marking, November 29, 1899, the cover bears the Bruxelles (Brussels), Belgium, arrival marking of November 30. As free soldiers' mail was not recognized by Belgium, a 50 centimes, yellow-brown postage due (Scotts' J8) was applied and cancelled on the same date.

For years it had been known that this "transfer of mail at sea" took place, but this is the only cover, definitely known to exist, which can be traced to this

Fig. 4. Type II Canadian Y. M. C. A. envelope. Postmarked with the double-circle "Field Post Office, B. O." Base Office marking, of Dec. 26, 1899. According to Rich's "Philately of the Anglo-Boer War," this was the date of the earliest Canadian Contingent cover known to him. Note that the covers in Figs. 1 and 2 are much earlier.

historic event. Until others turn up, this cover will remain the earliest of the Canadian Contingent.

From the same correspondence came another cover which is a fitting companion for the first. This cover (Figs. 2 and 3) was mailed at Cape Town on the day of landing (November 30, 1899) the same day that the first cover arrived at Brussels. Notations on the reverse side indicate that the letter was written on November 25th, aboard ship.

Unfortunately, there were no special postal markings until after the arrival of the Second Contingent and the Canadian Postal Corps. Then the familar Canadian Contingent Cachet was put into use. Only because of the use of Canadian Y. M. C. A. envelopes, made especially for the Contingent in South Africa, can soldiers' covers of the earlier group be identified.

There are at least three types of Y. M. C. A. envelopes used during this early period. The cover illustrated in Fig. 1 is Type I, and appears to be the earliest used. This type, also used in Canada, is not common. Type II, shown in Fig. 4, is quite scarce. It shows the imprint reading "Dr. H. G. Barrie /

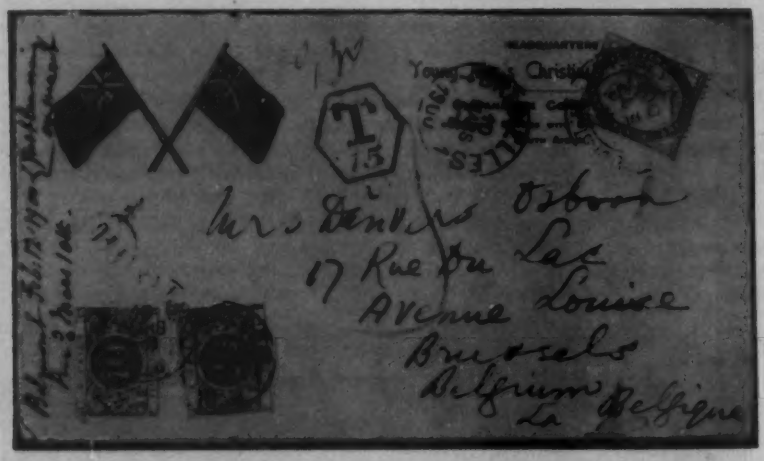

Fig. 5. Type III Canadian Y. M. C. A. envelope postmarked with same Base Office marking as Fig. 4. Feb. 17, 1900. Why was the "Barrie Imprint" removed?

Officer in Charge" below crossed flags. Dr. Barrie accompanied the First Contingent aboard the "S. S. Sardinian." All Type II covers which the writer has seen, or have been reported to him, were used in either December 1899 or January 1900, a rather short period.

Type III Y. M. C. A. covers are seen most frequently. Their use started in early February 1900 and continued at least through that summer (Fig. 5).

Fig. 6. Lieut. Col. W. D. Otter, Commanding Officer of the Canadian Contingents.

There is still another Canadian Y. M. C. A. cover type IV, which has a single large Canadian flag with a four-line inscription above and a two-line inscription below. Since this did not come into use until late in 1900, it does not serve to identify the mail of the First Contingent prior to the arrival of the Canadian Postal Corps.

The Commanding Officer of the Canadian Contingents was Lieut. Col. W. D. Otter, who had seen considerable action, including service as an officer in putting down the North-West Rebellion of 1885.

Col. Otter accompanied the First Contingent aboard the "S. S. Sardinian." A letter from him, addressed to his wife and bearing the Canadian Contingent Cachet marking, is shown in Fig. 11.

He was also the subject of at least one known Canadian Patriotic of the

Fig. 7. A rare used Boer War Patriotic card of Canada, featuring Lt. Col. Otter, Commanding Officer of the Canadian Contingents in South Africa.

Boer War (Fig. 7). It was one of a series of 10 designs, each bearing the portrait of a Canadian officer with the forces in South Africa. These designs, which appeared in 1900, were known as "The Soldiers of Canada—in South Africa" series, and they are quite rare.

The Second Contingent and the Postal Corps Cachet

The Canadian Contingent Cachet or Postal Marking is certainly one of the most interesting of all Canadian military markings. It was designed and produced by a well known Ottawa firm, and was used for a period of approximately nine months during 1900 by the Canadian Postal Corps in South Africa, part of which must have accompanied the first section of the Second Contingent aboard the "Laurentian" of the Allan line.

Unlike the First Contingent, the Second sailed to South Africa in three sections. Members were recruited principally in the Canadian Northwest, and the three sections totaled approximately 1,310 men, officers and staff.

Section I, with which we are principally interested, sailed from Halifax on January 21, 1900 aboard the "Laurentian." The troops consisted of "D" and "E" Batteries, Brigade Division, Royal Canadian Artillery.

Accompanying this section were at least some of the Canadian Postal Corps; all are listed as having accompanied some section of the Second Contingent.

Fig. 8. Canadian Contingent "In TRANSIT" marking of January 30, 1900. Backstamped Guelph, Ont., Feb. 16th, just one day earlier than the arrival date of the Second Contingent (1st section) at Cape Town.

Also accompanying the Second Contingent, and possibly the first section, were four Red Cross nurses and an additional Y. M. C. A. representative, a Mr. T. F. Best.

Again, unlike the First Contingent, this group of men enjoyed a four-hour stop at St. Vincent, Cape Verde Islands, on January 31, 1900. This stop gives

Fig. 9. Another cover bearing the "EN ROUTE" marking but which was not mailed until March 6th.

rise to another interesting phase of postal history—the Canadian Contingent "EN ROUTE" marking, or cachet. (Fig. 8).

This Contingent "EN ROUTE" marking is quite rare, only four covers, and one "cut out" are known. These markings, unknown to the philatelic world until late 1946, all bear the same date. The cover illustrated is identified with "D" Battery, Royal Canadian Artillery, which sailed as part of the Second Contingent, Section I.

There is a possibility that the men were supplied in advance with envelopes bearing the "EN ROUTE" marking. This would have facilitated the handling of a peak load of letters the day of the mailing. This theory is borne out by the second cover bearing the "EN ROUTE" marking (Fig. 9). Note, in particular, the "Jan. 30, 1900" date. But the cover was not mailed until

Fig. 10. A very early use of the Canadian Contingent Cachet, March 23, 1900, on a Canadian patriotic cover, one of the few Canadian patriotics known to have been used from South Africa.

2½ weeks after the troops arrived in South Africa. Note, also, that the cover was furnished by the Allan Line, the operators of the "Laurentian."

Sections II and III do not provide us with any known special markings. The Second Section left Halifax on the "Pomeranian" on January 27th and arrived at Cape Town on February 26th. This section was made up of the 2nd Battalion, Canadian Mounted Rifles. Section III, made up of the 1st Battalion, Canadian Mounted Rifles, and "C" Battery left Halifax on February 21st and arrived at Cape Town on March 21st.

The earliest recorded use of the regular Canadian Contingent cachet is March 20, 1900. Apparently this interesting postal military marking was the same handstamp as the "EN ROUTE" marking but with certain words carved out. One wonders why there was a delay in the use of this marking from the time of the arrival of the Section I of the Second Contingent (February 17th) until the first recorded use on March 20th. The earliest date in the writer's collection is on an attractive "Patriotic Cover" apparently brought along with one of the troops from Halifax. It is dated March 23, 1900 (Fig. 10).

It is interesting to note that there was a gradual change in the color of the inks used on these Contingent markings during their brief life of less than a year: red—March, April and May; magenta—June; purple—July and early

Fig. 11. Another cover with the Canadian Continent marking from the correspondence of Lt. Col. Otter to his wife. Otter was the Commanding officer of the Canadian Contingents.

August; and deep purple—late August, September, October and December.

It will be noted that November is not listed above as no covers have been seen by the writer with dates for that month. October dates are quite plentiful, but September and December dates are scarce; March dates are rare.

All Canadian Contingent cachet covers, known to this writer, are addressed to Canada. But not all covers, originating with Canadian troops and addressed to Canada, are so marked.

It is believed, from a study of the British Army P. O. markings found on these covers, that the Canadian Postal Corps, which applied the cachet, was located near, or at the Base Office.

Two sections of the Third Canadian Contingent sailed for either South Africa or England as replacements. In addition, in Section I of this Contingent was the famous "Strathconas Horse" made-up of men from the North West Mounted Police.

Section I, with the "Strathcona" unit and 100 men for replacements in the First Contingent, left Halifax on the "Monterey" on March 17th, arriving in Cape Town on April 11th. Section II, made up of only fifty reinforcements for the Strathconas, left Montreal, May 1, and sailed to South Africa by way of England.

The latest date known for the use of the Canadian Contingent Cachet is December 27, 1900. And that cover is from an officer of the Strathcona unit.

The study of Canadian Contingent Cachet markings, and other related material, relative to Canadian participation in the Anglo-Boer War is a fascinating field for the postal history specialist. Only a few of the more interesting types of covers to be found have been discussed here; however, a much greater field lies in the study of various British Army P. O. markings used on Canadian troop mail. There is also a great field left almost untouched covering the Canadian troops which remained in South Africa with the various units of the British Army, under Lords Roberts and Kitchener, long after the "official" return of the Canadian Contingents to their homeland in late 1900 and early 1901.

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